



# Science & Health News

VOLUME 18, NUMBER 2, SUMMER 2022



**ALUMNI  
LIFTING  
WISCONSIN  
TO NEW  
HEIGHTS**



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# Science & Health News

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-LA CROSSE  
COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND HEALTH  
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#### CLASS NOTES POLICY

Update your address and provide a class note for the Lantern at [uwlalumni.org](http://uwlalumni.org).

**ON THE COVER:** Ryan Sands, '15, is a project manager in the Environmental Division at J.F. Brennan in La Crosse. UWL has begun partnering with J.F. Brennan to help students receive specific skills making them job-ready.

# STEM STRENGTH

## Alumni lifting Wisconsin to new heights

Exercise and sport science teaching and administration. River and freshwater research. Cutting-edge health care. Answers about COVID, Lyme Disease and more.

They're all important for Wisconsin's future — and UWL will play an even larger part in helping the Badger State meet workforce challenges.

Top-notch faculty in CSH offer the perfect prescription for success in the state. They're helping everyone from K-12 teachers get innovative, to hands-on STEM — Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics — experience that inspires and prepares Wisconsin's next generation.

A key to propelling the state's workforce is replacing UWL's outdated Cowley Hall, which has worse learning spaces than almost any high school in the state. The Prairie Springs Science Center Completion/Cowley Hall Demolition project is needed to help the economy grow.

In this issue, we look at CSH alumni across the state — how faculty mentored them, why they stayed in Wisconsin and how they're impacting their communities across the state.

**Find out more about the project:**

*Architect's rendering  
of the Prairie Springs  
Science Center  
Completion/Cowley  
Hall Demolition project.*

# Rolling on the river

Sands a testament that UWL is key to filling state's STEM jobs

## Ryan Sands, '15

**Hometown:** DeForest, Wisconsin

**Major/Minor:** Geography, environmental science concentration/Earth Science

**Currently:** Project manager in the Environmental Division at J.F. Brennan, La Crosse

Ryan Sands knows firsthand the importance of a great education — and the impact faculty have on students.

It's why he's successful in his career. And it's the reason he's stayed in Wisconsin. In fact, he admits he'll always call La Crosse home.

The DeForest native says his UWL education paved his path to the Wisconsin workforce.

“UWL provides a great foundation to prepare students for future opportunities in a variety of fields,” he explains. “The university’s programs are diverse in providing applications and research for many facets of each industry.”

For Sands, it was Geography Department faculty who made a difference.

“They all were open to improving every student, and willing to assist in and out of the classroom,” he explains. “And they are always striving to better the future of their students.”

When Sands was on campus in the 2010s, Cowley Hall was it for science. The building

and classrooms were old and outdated, he recalls. Future expansion of science-based labs, classrooms and lecture halls in PSSC II are critical in enhancing the experience before heading into the state workforce.

And UWL is great at assisting students in finding those career opportunities — focusing on needed STEM jobs, notes Sands. Recently, UWL began partnering with J.F. Brennan to help students receive specific skills making them job-ready.

“This should build networking with local employers and provide training on potential career fields for future students,” he predicts.

Ryan Sands, '15, says his UWL education paved his path to the Wisconsin workforce.



*Maureen Vorwald, '89, says faculty and coaches on campus mentored her into becoming an award-winning teacher. (Photos courtesy of UW-Platteville Communications.)*

# Top teacher

Vorwald provides a basis for physical education

## Maureen Vorwald, '89

**Hometown:** Bagley, Wisconsin

**Major/Major:** Physical education/  
corporate fitness

**Currently:** National Board Certified Physical Education Teacher, Platteville High School

Maureen Vorwald originally thought about leaving Wisconsin for someplace warm. But she stayed, reaffirming her appreciation of all of Wisconsin's seasons and beauty — along with the state's strong educational system and its family-friendly reputation.

And the Badger State, particularly Platteville where she teaches high school physical education, is lucky she did.

Among her many honors over more than three decades in teaching is the 2014 SHAPE Midwest District High School Physical Education Teacher of the Year Award. Vorwald attributes a trio of UWL mentors for her solid basis heading into the classroom.

In teaching pedagogy, she was strongly influenced by Judy Pace. "She shaped many of us into fine physical education teachers by helping us create organized, detailed and engaging lessons," Vorwald explains.

Another mentor was Maurita Robarge. "She demonstrated a great passion for fitness and had a strong vision for how fitness could be better integrated into physical education," says Vorwald. "Both of these mentors had very high expectations for all students and were terrific role models with positive energy."

Former Head Women's Basketball Coach Terri Sheridan helped Vorwald develop strong leadership skills that have served her well throughout her educational journey. Vorwald still holds the all-time assist record in women's basketball.

UWL prepared Vorwald well for her success in teaching tomorrow's leaders. "While at UW-La Crosse, I learned the



importance of having a strong work ethic, good time management skills, and being a positive and clear communicator," she says.

Vorwald speaks highly of the city, along with the well-rounded education, vast offerings and its "perfect size" with small class sizes and good teacher-to-student ratio.

The one thing she would change: Cowley Hall. Even more than 30 years ago, it needed to be replaced, she notes.

"I am not sure many of us enjoyed having classes in Cowley Hall," Vorwald says. "It was an older facility that needed a facelift."

With her son, Isaac attending UWL, Vorwald is even more excited to see the progress happening on campus.

## MARSHFIELD

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**Emily Botten, '19**

**Hometown:** Menasha

**Major/Minor:** Biology/Spanish

**Currently:** Research assistant at the Marshfield Clinic Research Institute, Marshfield

She went from questioning herself for being a biology major to conducting research to help end the pandemic and combat Lyme disease.

Emily Botten says while most professors on campus impacted her, one did in particular. It was Professor Michael Abler, whom she had for a genetics class her second year of college, but also helped set her on a career path.

"I remember my junior year being in a mid-college crisis, doubting the path I had chosen and where it would take me," recalls Botten. "I went to Dr. Abler with my worries.

He sat down with me, and we discussed the endless amount of options that I would have post-graduation."

After graduating, she asked Abler to write a letter of recommendation.

"Not only did he write the letter, but he was so encouraging along the way," explains Botten. "The college experience can be really tough at times, but it goes so much smoother when you know you have someone on your side."

With COVID hitting when she graduated, Botten, like most, didn't know what the future held. Working as a CNA, she heard Wisconsin history and memories from patients. It bolstered her strong connection to the state.

"Today, I work with research that is critical to Wisconsin residents' health and safety, and I could not be prouder to be doing so," she says. "Not only do I get to have a

positive impact on the global pandemic, but also on issues that are hyper endemic to my community such as Blastomycosis and Lyme disease."

Botten was fortunate to learn in the Prairie Springs Science Center during her junior and senior years. Cowley Hall offered uncomfortable labs and classrooms with outdated equipment and cramped space.

"Cowley Hall has a lot of history behind it; however, PSSC has state-of-the-art labs and equipment that encourage students to be fully immersed in their education, better preparing them for a career," she explains.

Botten chose UWL because of its excellent science curriculum. Eventually, she fell in love with the area.

"I love the outdoors, so the Driftless Area was perfect," she says. "La Crosse is a beautiful city with so much to offer."

# Uncertainty into inquiry

Botten now addressing two of the state's biggest health concerns

*Emily Botten, '19, says stories she heard from patients while working as a CNA bolstered her connection to Wisconsin.*



## GREEN BAY

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*Brian Gutekunst, general manager of the Green Bay Packers, got his start at UWL in the mid-1990s.*





# Leader of the Pack

Gutekunst says UWL helped him grow into top NFL spot

## **Brian Gutekunst, '16**

**Native of:** Raleigh, North Carolina

**Major:** Exercise and Sport Science

**Currently:** General Manager,  
Green Bay Packers

As general manager of the Green Bay Packers, Brian Gutekunst has become one of the top talent evaluators in the NFL.

But few know Gutekunst got his start at UWL in the mid-1990s, following a shoulder injury that ended his playing career.

“I was thinking about transferring to a school in North Carolina, so I could be closer to family,” Gutekunst remembers. “Coach (Roger) Harring told me I wasn’t leaving,

that I owed him. So I came back to help him coach and recruit. It was the biggest turning point in my life.”

Harring’s encouragement and Gutekunst’s loyalty paid major dividends.

Gutekunst thrived as a coach and recruiter, cultivating skills that led to a scouting internship with the Packers and, ultimately, his rise to GM. His promotion in January 2018, after two decades with the team, took some time to sink in.

“I don’t know if it hit me right away,” Gutekunst recalls. “From the moment I started working with the Packers, I always felt this humbling experience of what the organization is — the history of it and my role in keeping that going. That’s what is special about this place. You feel that weight and responsibility. This is the cornerstone franchise of the National Football League.

UWL provided Gutekunst a solid foundation on which to build his career, but he left one thing unfinished: his degree.

In 2016, nearly two decades after leaving campus, Gutekunst changed that. UWL worked with the Packers to create an internship within the framework of Gutekunst’s then-role as director of player personnel. He earned his bachelor’s that December, bringing his education full circle.

“It was very important to my mother,” Gutekunst says. “It meant a lot to me, too. The time I spent at UWL ... was very influential for me. To earn my degree and make that a more permanent thing, that was really special.”

# Mighty mentors

DeShaney says UWL prepared her for the workforce



Jenna DeShaney, '18

**Jenna DeShaney, '18**

**Hometown:** Appleton

**Major:** Geography with Environmental Science concentration

**Currently:** Environmental scientist at Westwood Professional Services, Appleton

Jenna DeShaney had two stellar mentors at UWL: Professor Colin Belby and Associate Professor Gargi Chaudhuri — both in the Geography & Earth Science Department.

They not only taught her important skills, but also mentored her through internships and Geographic Information Systems.

“Dr. Chaudhuri guided me in the right direction and gave me opportunities to think critically and independently,” DeShaney explains.

Belby mentored her during a research trip to the Spanish Virgin Islands.

“I learned a lot from him throughout the trip when we collected data, as well as throughout the semester when we analyzed the data for the final publication,” DeShaney says.

She took two internships, allowing her to apply what she learned in class and think independently. “UWL prepared me for the workforce by incorporating appropriate lessons, skills and technology to the classes,” she explains.

DeShaney stayed in Wisconsin to pursue a master’s degree at UW-Green Bay. After being offered a position at Westwood as an environmental scientist, she was excited to stay because it’s where she grew up, her family was nearby and she enjoys the state’s beauty.

DeShaney says UWL offers great opportunities for students. “From high-quality education to extracurricular activities to internships, the opportunities are endless,” she notes. “Plus, you can’t beat the views of the bluffs.”

# A good base

Klubertanz credits faculty for solid foundation

**Carl Klubertanz, '13 & '21**

**Hometown:** Galesville

**Major:** Recreation Management

**Currently:** CEO, Superior Douglas County Family YMCA, Superior, Wisconsin

UWL put Carl Klubertanz in the game when he started prepping to become a leader in recreation. In fact, faculty and their curricula helped him get the background and forge the connection that led him to become CEO of the Superior Douglas County Family YMCA.

Klubertanz says with his solid professional foundation set, he knew that with

Wisconsin's unique environment, people, culture and attitude he wanted to stay close to home. "I feel strongly connected to the Midwest and this will always be my home," he explains.

It's important to have adequate facilities to learn— especially in recreation and the sciences. And, it's the main reason UWL continues to push for the completion of the Prairie Springs Science Center.

As a recreation management major, Klubertanz found classroom and lab space in the Health Science Center adequate. A functioning pool in Mitchell Hall was key, too. "For me, the pools and subsequent

education around them helped start my career path after I graduated," he says.


Klubertanz encourages prospective students to ask themselves what they want from college. "If it is just for a slip of paper, I would highly suggest against it," he says.

Experience is everything, Klubertanz notes. It's essential for faculty to assist with networking and relationship-building, he says.

"If you want a good experience with faculty that have those connections to those working within your field, I would take a look at what UWL has to offer," Klubertanz says.

*Carl Klubertanz, '13 & '21, worked at the Dahl Family YMCA in La Crosse before he was named CEO of the Superior Douglas County Family YMCA earlier this year.*



A portrait of Dean Mark Sandheinrich, a middle-aged man with grey hair and a goatee, wearing a dark grey textured suit jacket, a white shirt, and a green and blue plaid tie. He is standing in front of a brick building with a large window. A small circular pin is visible on his lapel.

*Dean Mark Sandheinrich has made quite a mark on the College of Science & Health since 1988. Sandheinrich, named dean in 2018 after serving on an interim basis for two years, retired June 30.*

# AN IMPACTFUL CAREER

## MARK SANDHEINRICH RETIRING AFTER 34 YEARS

**M**ark Sandheinrich has made quite a mark on the College of Science & Health. Since arriving as a biology professor and researcher in 1988, Sandheinrich has played a key role in helping the college and its students meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Sandheinrich was named dean in 2018, after serving on an interim basis for two years, and has led the college through a time of transformation. His tenure included the opening of the state-of-the-art Prairie Springs Science Center, expansion of academic and research opportunities, and the college's response to a world-altering pandemic.

Before his retirement in June, Sandheinrich took a moment to reflect on his career.

### **Q: What first drew you to UWL, and why did you decide to spend your career here?**

**A:** I wanted to be at a mid-size comprehensive university that offered both undergraduate and graduate programs in biology and had opportunities for teaching and research in aquatic science. I remained at UWL because I had great mentors and colleagues, like Ron Rada, Tom Clafin and Jim Wiener, who supported my professional development. Because of them, I had opportunities to collaborate on unique projects in the lab and field and work with excellent students. La Crosse is also a great place to raise a family and have a very good quality of life.

### **Q: How has campus, and the CSH in particular, changed?**

**A:** The most dramatic change over the past 30 years has been the number and quality of new buildings and the improvement in the overall appearance of the campus. The number of students in CSH has also increased markedly. When I started in 1988, we had a combined Department of Biology and Microbiology with 28 faculty and staff, and about 350 undergraduate students. Today, Biology and Microbiology are separate departments with 56 faculty and staff, and over 1,300 undergraduate students.

### **Q: What are you most proud of during your time as dean? What are you most proud of during your career?**

As dean, I am most proud of our faculty and staff. They are, quite simply, fantastic. The faculty are excellent scholars who share every day their passion for their field with students through innovative teaching and experiential learning in the classroom and laboratory. The staff are dedicated to student success, and that remains their main focus in all of their activities.

During my career, I am most proud of my students. A colleague once stated: "We never take credit for our students' accomplishments, but we do take great pride in them." That is certainly true for me. Because of the excellent education they receive, our students leave UWL and go on to fantastic careers and exciting opportunities.

### **Q: What are some issues or initiatives that will be key to the college's future?**

**A:** Many of the future challenges are not unique to CSH, but are shared by all institutions of higher education. Changing demographics will likely mean fewer students entering college; we need to continue to evolve to remain a desirable institution from which to earn a degree. Part of that evolution includes working more closely with employers to provide degrees that meet the knowledge requirements for technical careers and changing workforce needs.

### **Q: What excites you about retirement? What will you miss about UWL?**

**A:** I plan to do a lot of backpacking, kayaking, as well as camping and traveling with my wife, Mary Jo. I also plan to fail at as many new hobbies and activities as possible. I've always loved learning new things, and now I'll have time for all of this. I will miss the wonderful colleagues and students who have made my time at UWL so fun and rewarding.

 [See more.](#)



*Biology major Bella Anderson received a 2022 Prairie Springs Environmental Leadership Award for her research into how La Crosse's bluffs have changed through the decades.*

# PRAIRIE SPRINGS ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP AWARDS

The awards are given annually to a student and faculty member who are taking environmental action in the community, while inspiring others to do the same.

 **See more about the Prairie Springs Excellence Award**

## 'Sustainability efforts truly matter'

La Crosse's bluffs are a timeless feature — one that, to the untrained eye, seems to change very little from one year to the next.

In reality, the bluffs are constantly evolving, in part due to human factors. A new project from

UWL senior Bella Anderson examines how the bluffs have been altered over the decades, and provides guidance on how they can be restored to their more natural state.

Anderson began her project by studying historical images of the bluffs provided by Jim Rogala, chair of the Prairie Enthusiasts Coulee Region Chapter. Using geographic information software made available by UWL, she noted how native prairie areas in the bluffs had diminished over the decades, and how they had been recently restored in places.

Anderson compiled these maps into a brochure explaining the importance of prairie habitats to not only the species that live there, but to humans as well.

The conservation of prairies “also promotes conservation of animal and plant species, which provides additional benefits for humans, such as pollution filtration,” she explains.

Alysa Remsburg, professor of environmental studies and Anderson's mentor, says she was impressed by Anderson's ability to apply principles she had learned in the classroom.

“She applied the environmental studies interdisciplinary minor by integrating history, communication, mapping skills, public education and habitat restoration,” Remsburg explains. “She seems driven by a genuine commitment to community and a love for learning about people improving the environment.”

Anderson says the success of her project is particularly rewarding given her identity as a first-generation college student and a woman in science.

She hopes her research will continue to have an impact for years to come, inspiring others to consider how their actions might affect the environment.

“Creating these maps creates archivable information that can be used again in the future to compare prairie areas changing over time — hopefully growing due to restoration efforts — which can provide an even deeper analysis of our impact on our natural world,” she says. “We can analyze if our restoration tools are making a change, positive or negative, and alter the course of how we restore our environment.”

## Demystifying the Mississippi

The Mississippi River is many things to the La Crosse community.

An object of beauty. An aquatic playground. A driver of commerce. A defining landmark of the place we call home.

But the Mississippi continues to hold secrets for scientists who wonder about human impacts on the aquatic organisms in local river ecosystems.

A new project by Assistant Professor of Biology Ross Vander Vorste and his students is filling those gaps.

“Large rivers are one of the most biodiverse and imperiled ecosystems on the planet. However, research into how climate change and other human-induced stressors are impacting these ecosystems is lacking due to their size and dynamic environmental conditions,” says Vander



*Biology Professor Ross Vander Vorste, right, received a 2022 Prairie Springs Environmental Leadership Award for his and his students' research into the biology of the Mississippi River.*

Vorste. “For the last three years, my students and I have used lab- and field-based research to determine key factors influencing biodiversity and productivity of invertebrates, and begun quantifying long-term trends in biological communities in the Upper Mississippi River.”

Since detecting the underlying factors that influence the biology of the Mississippi is so difficult, Vander Vorste and his students created 36 artificial aquatic mesocosm habitats in the Prairie Springs Science Center.

These mesocosms — small-scale reproductions of the natural environment — allow the team to manipulate environmental factors such as temperature and water quality, yielding useful insights into how changing conditions may affect various organisms.

The team is also compiling a long-term ecological dataset based on field research on the Mississippi, which will hopefully be used by agencies, such as Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Geological Survey, when making river monitoring and management decisions aimed at protecting the biodiversity and productivity of river ecosystems.

“Long-term ecological datasets are critical for understanding trends and making predictions about the impacts of climate change and other anthropogenic stressors,” Vander Vorste explains. “Recent collaborations with state and federal agencies ... are making practical contributions to environmental studies and conservation.”

While the project is paying immediate dividends, Vander Vorste says the greatest impact is yet to be seen. That will come in the form of students, for years to come, gaining invaluable experience conducting high-level, actionable environmental research.

“Building the laboratory mesocosm system in Prairie Springs will result in hundreds of students getting hands-on research experience related to environmental studies and conservation in the coming years,” he says. “Experiments are on-going, and a planned expansion of the mesocosm system will ensure students receive training that advances their skills and involvement in research that has practical applications for freshwater biodiversity conservation.”



# INSECT INSPIRATION

For Barrett Klein, there's beauty in every bug

*Over the years, Biology Professor Klein has helped thousands of students appreciate the diversity, beauty and ecological impact of insects.*

**G**rowing up on the outskirts of Detroit, Barrett Klein treasured every piece of wilderness he could find.

His mother's garden, the city zoo, pockets of nature around the neighborhood — all were sources of endless fascination for Klein.

One day, he discovered a dead butterfly in the family's driveway. It was a moment that left an indelible mark on his young mind, and inspired his lifelong obsession with insects.

"I remember experiencing a thrill of knowing that insects could play a huge role in my life. How? I didn't know, but not knowing helped fuel my exhilaration," says Klein, a biology professor specializing in entomology. "Sometimes, all it takes is a

single, tiny creature to open our eyes or redirect our lives."

Since 2012, Klein has shared his passion for insects — from dancing honey bees, to farming leaf-cutter ants, to singing crickets — with thousands of students. Often, this involves gently converting those who regard insects as creepy and crawly — little nuisances to be squished by a shoe.

To Klein, insects are spectacularly diverse, amazing organisms. The vast amount of good they do for people and the planet, he says, is rivaled only by their beauty.

"All around us, we have these marvelous little beings that exhibit just about every form, color and behavior imaginable,"

he explains. "If you are drawn to flashy iridescence or perfect crypsis, the delicate or the armored, the solitary or the social, the aquatic or the terrestrial, insects represent over 400 million years of evolution, radiating into more than one million described species. The diversity is so outrageous, there is something out there to appeal to any willing eye or mind."

In his quest to capture the intricacies of insects, it was fortunate that Klein came from a family of artists.

His mother and father owned an art gallery for 40 years. His sister is a luthier and a writer. And his twin brother is a scientist who creates masks that could be considered masterpieces.



Naturally, Klein made insects the focus of **his art**.

His work includes scientific illustrations, usually colored pencil or ink on paper. He also spent years making insect models for museums, including the American Museum of Natural History in New York City.

Lately, he has used the sculpting skills he learned from model-making to create wearable, insect-themed masks. The kicker: The masks are made from materials produced by insects, such as wax from honey bees, paper from wasp nests, silk from silkworm moths and carmine dye from cochineal bugs.

For Klein, entomology is much more than a nine-to-five. He leans — dives — into the “bug guy” persona.

When he applied to UWL, Klein showed up to his interview in ant-themed clothing, head to toe. He jokes that it was the deciding factor in his employment.

Even his home is a shrine of sorts:

“Everywhere you turn in my home, insects remind me of their importance and their beauty — whether it’s insect art on the walls, our tank of Madagascar hissing cockroaches, or my collection of insect comic books, music, literature, stamps, currency, advertisements and foods.”

Insects, Klein says, “are just about always on my mind.”

All this effort and enthusiasm comes with a simple goal: to get others to stop and marvel at insects the same way a young Klein once stopped and marveled at a dead butterfly.

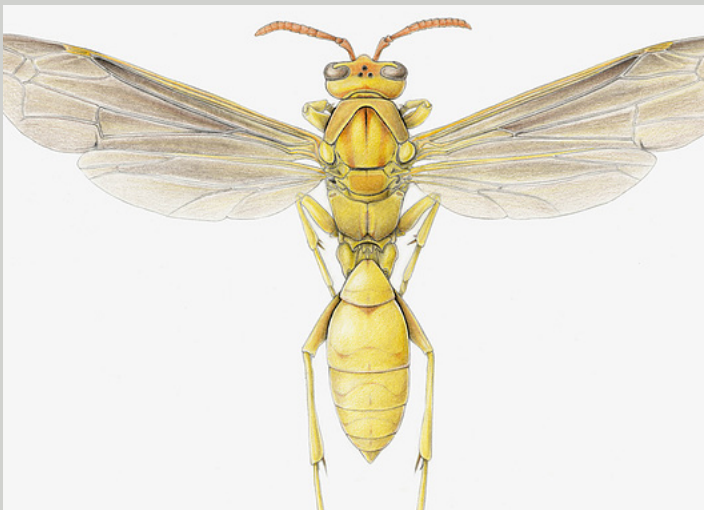
More than any other member of the animal kingdom, insects manage to fly under humanity’s radar. Yet no other class of animal is more important to our survival, Klein notes.

“Our very existence depends on the insects around us. They provide ecological services by pollinating, decomposing and feeding others, without which ecosystems would crumble,” Klein says. “If I can play a part in getting people to appreciate insects, maybe we can do more, individually and collectively, to behave less destructively and conserve some of the grand diversity we should celebrate and treasure.”

### More on Klein and insect art

- Klein’s article looks at how insects and their products have been used in art.
- Klein was recently featured in Knowable Magazine.
- Klein recently gave a TEDx talk on campus.

 [See more.](#)



A colored pencil illustration of *Polistes flavus*, also known as the yellow paper wasp. Barrett Klein, 1999

A mixed-media model of *Chlaenius*, a type of ground beetle. Barrett Klein, 1996

# What's in a name?

CSH department takes on new designation



Professors Anders Cedergren, left, and Gary Gilmore.

**T**here's a new departmental title in the College of Science and Health: The Department of Public Health and Community Health Education. Previously the Department of Health Education and Health Promotion, the new title was unanimously passed this spring by the department's faculty, college dean, university provost and Faculty Senate.

There are numerous reasons behind the change, say Professors Gary Gilmore and Anders Cedergren.

- The new title accurately reflects the department's mission that has evolved over six decades. During the 1960s, it was first titled the Department of Health Education. In the 1980s, it became the Department of Health Education and Health Promotion.
- The first degree offered was the Bachelor of Science in Health Education, followed by the Bachelor of Science in Community Health Education, and the Bachelor of Science in Public Health with a concentration in Community Health Education. The program was accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) in 2006 — one of

the nation's first baccalaureate programs accredited. At the graduate level, during the 1970s the Master of Science in Health Education was offered with concentrations in School Health Education (SHE) and Community Health Education (CHE), and then the Master of Public Health, which was the UW System's first MPH program, approved by the Board of Regents in 1991, and nationally accredited by CEPH in 1992. The MPH, which ranked sixth nationally as a Graduate Community Health program by U.S. News & World Report in 2004, is currently being restructured based on increasing professional need in public health and evolving advanced core competencies.

- The department has been a nationally authorized Multiple Event Provider (MEP) of professional development opportunities in public health and health promotion for 25 years under the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing Inc. (NCHEC). The ongoing authorization enables the department to offer continuing education programming that contributes to Certified Health Education Specialists (CHES) and

Master-level Specialists (MCHES) accruing the required minimum of 75 Continuing Education Contact Hours (CECHs) every five years to remain current and certified. The department collaborates with UWL Graduate & Extended Learning to provide health-related continuing education learning opportunities for other disciplines and community-based professionals.

- Through professional preparation, credentialing, and professional development, the department continues to prepare public health candidates for the global challenges of health and well-being — enabling them to score high on the national health education specialist certification examination. In October 2017, alumna Gabby Fitzgerald was the top scorer on the national Certified Health Education Specialist examination out of 915 test takers.
- Department courses offered include the prefixes and foci of CHE (Community Health Education), HED (Health Education), and P-H (Public Health). The department's faculty have been fully prepared through graduate and professional experiences to appropriately address the course distinctions.
- COVID-19, coupled with ongoing endemic and epidemic diseases, have resulted in more interactivity among public health and medical care practitioners. The department's public health efforts over the years serve as a catalyst for collaboration with practitioners.

“We are proud of the evolution of our department over time in contributing to a healthier society,” say Professors Gilmore and Cedergren. “We welcome inquiries about our programs and further opportunities to partner in public health with others.”



## FRONT LINE SCIENCE, CAREER ADVICE

Assistant Professor of Biology Jaclyn Wisinski, top center, and her Cell Signaling Class, BIO483/583, during the spring semester interviewed Fallon Noto, lower left, Executive Director of R&D and In Vivo Systems at HeraLabs.

HeraLabs is a Contract Research Organization (CRO) that has developed and characterized a rat model system (OncoRat) that human tumor cells can grow in. Noto discussed the challenges and benefit of the OncoRat model system, the patent process and interaction with clients.

Noto also shared career advice. Several students who graduated in May were encouraged to hear that HeraLabs, like other CROs, has many entry-level positions for new grads.



## THEY CARE ABOUT RARE

Bright colors helped a group of biology students get the word out that they care about rare diseases.

Students in Jaclyn Wisinski's Cell Biology class, BIO 315, worked on a spring semester-long project to individually investigate rare diseases as a way to apply cell biology concepts.

The students also participated in "Share your colors," the Rare Disease Day slogan in 2022, by wearing bright colors on International Rare Disease Feb. 28.

**Find out more about Rare Disease Day.**

# FACT-FINDING FRIENDS

MATH DEPARTMENT RESEARCH  
AMOUNTS TO FAVORABLE OUTCOME

**F**or Mary Vaughan, the many hours she spent researching as a mathematics major on campus — along with the faculty she gained as mentors — are adding up to a successful career.

Vaughan started graduate school at Iowa State University in fall 2015 to pursue a doctorate in mathematics after earning her UWL mathematics degree that spring. Her research focuses on the mathematical analysis of partial differential equations. She defended her dissertation in May 2020 and became a postdoctoral researcher in the University of Texas at Austin Mathematics Department in August 2020.

The path to postgraduate researcher wasn't always clear to Vaughan. It took her over a year as a chemistry major to realize her mathematics passion. Mathematics & Statistics Professor James Peirce helped her understand her options as a math major and encouraged her to apply for a summer Dean's Distinguished Fellowship. Next, he suggested that she consider attending graduate school.

Peirce became the first of her many mentors in the department. As Vaughan continued into upper-level courses, she found significant support and community among the department's faculty.

"Every instructor I had mentored me in a different way and helped shape me into the mathematician I am today," she notes.

Another mentor was Associate Professor Tushar Das. Vaughan says Das supported her not only through college, but also through graduate school, navigating the job market and starting her first job during a global pandemic.

"I cannot sing enough praises about the Mathematics Department at UWL, and I am very proud to be an alum," she says.

Vaughan continued that collegiality through graduate school and beyond. After working with Anna Aboud, now at Westmont College, in grad school, they knew they wanted to continue researching together after graduation. They found an interesting project that merges their two seemingly different areas of research.

There was additional overlap with Tushar's research, so they invited him into the project. Eventually, they added Patricia Alonso Ruiz, Texas A&M, to complete the quartet.

They applied for and received a SQuaRE (Structured Quartet Research Ensemble) grant that provides funding for them to meet at the American Institute of Mathematics in California one week out of the year for three years.

"The SQuaRE has provided a special opportunity for our quartet to work together and learn from each other," Vaughan says. "Each of us has a unique perspective on our project which we combine to develop new

ideas and directions. We are excited to continue working together and to see where the research leads us."

The group's project deals with long-range interactions. With recent technological advancements, scientists have observed long-range interactions across both physical and social sciences. For instance, they model the way flames propagate quickly across a surface, how viruses can spread rapidly across the globe, and how people interact in social networks.

"Our research project is a very natural outcome of grafting our combined expertise with the hope of discovering some new mathematics in the bargain," explains Das.

Vaughan is one of 16 students Das has helped mentor into prestigious graduate programs nationwide.

"I experience great personal joy in challenging my students and inspiring them to achieve beyond their own expectations," he says. "As a result, the vast majority of my time is involved with my teaching and intensive mentoring of our burgeoning constellation of graduate school-bound majors, many of whom are from underrepresented groups in STEM, such as women and first-generation students."

Several of these students had not even considered graduate school until their second or third year. All were amazed to learn of their math faculty's belief in them being accepted



Mary Vaughan, '15, and Mathematics and Statistics Department Associate Professor Tushar Das. They have maintained a working relationship that helped them receive a national grant.

with full funding to mathematics doctorate programs, and with possibilities for additional fellowships.

Das says other faculty in the Mathematics and Statistics Department also mentor their students. It's a reason the department was the UW System's 2015 Regents Teaching Excellence Award recipient.

"Building long-lasting relationships with individual students who continue to develop past graduation and thus forming life-long-learning communities has been key to our faculty's success with mentoring math majors to getting fully-funded acceptances to excellent Ph.D. programs across the USA," Das says.

Currently, three more alums mentored by the department, Mitchell Haeuser, Kean Fallon and Laura Zinnel, are working on doctorates at Iowa State, where Vaughan attended. They will be joined in Fall 2022 by recent graduate, Joe Miller.

Haeuser, Fallon and Miller have all served as presidents of the UWL Math & Stats Club. Haeuser is now working with Vaughan's dissertation advisor, Pablo Raúl Stinga.

"They will be part of the same academic family," says Das. He predicts "more collaborations developing between members of our ever-growing extended UWL mathematics family in the years to come."

### Learn more about Mathematics and Statistics Department mentors—

 **'Building the future of math'**

 **How a student transformed a 1.6 GPA into six, full-ride graduate school offers.**

### Math faculty shining

Five Math Department faculty have received Eagle Teaching awards in recent years. All mentored math majors like Vaughan who went on to math doctorate programs.

"We are building the future of math," says Tushar Das. "The best part of my job is seeing students succeed. I don't think anything makes me happier than seeing the next generation of mathematicians develop and knowing I had a part in it."

**They include:**

- **2020** — Tushar Das
- **2019** — Nathan Warnberg
- **2018** — Whitney George
- **2015** — Eddie Kim

# STREAM STUDIES


## Students mapping northeastern Iowa waterways

**A**UWL professor and his students are working to help ease the impact of climate change in northeast Iowa streams

Niti Mishra, associate professor of Geography and Earth Science, and his team of undergraduate student researchers are detecting and mapping cold-water streams using satellite imagery for the driftless region in northeastern Iowa.

Coldwater streams are crucial habitats for many types of biota, including trout species that are unable to tolerate warmer temperature. Climate change is projected to alter the prevalent thermal characteristics of cold-water streams and managing these streams requires the knowledge of where they exist on the landscape.

While temporal data from field temperature loggers are traditional way of assigning stream thermal designation, they



*Students are detecting and mapping cold-water streams using satellite imagery for the driftless region in northeastern Iowa.*



Grace Kunkel is one of the students involved with the cold-water stream research. “This opportunity is a great way to experience what it would be like to do Remote Sensing/GIS research outside of a classroom setting”.



Geography major Ethan Wedemayer has been involved with the satellite imagery research for a year.

are limited in scope and extent. The research team found that by using spatially detailed winter imagery, it is possible to distinguish cold-water streams from warm-water streams.

The ongoing research is funded through a federal grant from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and has financed four undergraduate researchers.

Geography major Ethan Wedemayer has been involved with the research for a year. In March 2022, he virtually presented his research on detecting cold-water streams using satellite imagery at the annual meeting of the Association of American Geographers.

“My time working as an undergraduate research assistant was very beneficial for both my academic and professional skills,” Wedemayer says. “From learning more about GIS/remote sensing methodology to improving my communication skills by presenting my work at multiple conferences, this research has allowed me to feel more confident in my time after college and in the workplace.”

Grace Kunkel is also involved. She says the opportunity offers an experience of what it’s like to do Remote Sensing/GIS research outside the classroom.

“I really appreciate the level of involvement I got working together as a team with not only Dr. Mishra, but the Iowa-DNR as well,” Kunkel says. “I really look forward to what other future opportunities this research experience will help open to me in the field of GIS based environmental research.”



Article by  
Associate Professor  
Niti Mishra, Geography  
and Earth Science

# PRAIRIE PRESERVATION

## TAYLOR PRILL PUTS HER DEGREE TO WORK THROUGH RESTORATION PROJECT

**T**aylor Prill has returned to her hometown to make her geography degree flourish.

Prill, '20, is working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to restore a retired, three-acre hayfield in Clintonville into a native prairie. It will have a public walkway where people can learn more about the plant and animal species that can be observed in the area.

The goal of the project is to raise awareness of decreasing pollinator populations and habitats in Wisconsin, Prill says. The update will also work to educate community members about how they can help mitigate stressors and aid populations.

"I am very passionate about the restoration of native environments and am thrilled to be involved in a project like this," says Prill who

graduated with a bachelor's degree in geography with a concentration in environmental science and a minor in earth science.

She has started to conserve and restore the three-acre portion of land at her long-time job at Memory Lanes Bar & Grill in her hometown, 40 miles west of Green Bay. Her plan is to convert the unused land into a beautiful public space that can be used for photography, weddings and outdoor classes.

Prill says she is "the sole person responsible for this project" — a big undertaking for a recent graduate.

Even Clintonville High School students have taken an interest in the restoration. The students have helped build benches

and birdhouses, as well as researched information on pollinator species to include in the brochures. Prill says they have plans for the area, too.

Prill says the most interesting aspect of their involvement is their proposal to have students learn about and install a solar-powered pond.

"That's the part that I am personally very excited about," she explains.


Prill says that, despite the large scope of undertaking the restoration project, she's confident her college education set her up for success.

"UWL has provided me with the strong foundation in research, planning and knowledge needed to be where I am today," she says. "From designing and writing the project proposal to working with experienced professionals in a professional setting, I have been able to succeed and start making those critical connections required to define my future career and success."

Prill plans to incorporate native Wisconsin prairie species of plants and animals into the area, along with some endangered pollinators.

The project will be completed in fall 2022 and Prill says the space will look bare for the first few years. But, by the fourth and fifth years, she predicts a fully restored into a beautiful and flourishing space.

-Story by Maddie Kozel, English student



Taylor Prill, '20, is restoring a retired, three-acre hayfield near her hometown of Clintonville, Wisconsin, into native prairie. "I am very passionate about the restoration of native environments and am thrilled to be involved in a project like this," she says.



# What is influencing decisions to take or leave a job in La Crosse?

A lot has been reported the past few years on how the pandemic has affected the workforce. So much has happened, and with so many changes come even more unknowns.

What is the workforce going to look like moving forward? How are people making decisions about where to work?

Students in a Recreation Management Evaluation and Methods course are trying to find out. They set out to learn more about what employment and community factors are influencing workforce related decisions, including relocating for a job, and deciding to stay or leave a current employer.

With the help of several La Crosse community partners, 11 recreation management students designed a survey to address the questions. They collected 71 responses for preliminary analysis.

Results showed that 28.6% of respondents had relocated for their current job. Over half of all respondents indicated they are currently considering leaving their place of employment.

While a preliminary analysis provided some interesting results regarding employment and community factors that are influencing perceptions and decisions, the amount of data collected before the fall semester ended was not enough to draw any further conclusions.

However, three students from the course — Sara Monday, Emma Moore, Kilee Sipusich — committed to continuing work



*Recreation Management working on the study with Associate Professor Dan Plunkett, right, include from left, Emma Moore, Sara Monday and Kilee Sipusich.*

on the project. Through summer they are working with Recreation Management and Therapeutic Recreation Associate Professor Dan Plunkett and community partners to boost the sample sizing by reaching out to gain support from local employers.

They hope to increase the survey response rate and create presentation materials to help community organizations better understand what is happening in the workforce and improve recruitment and retention efforts.

Unknowns will still exist, but their research will offer more clarity and opportunities to enrich and support the La Crosse workforce.



Article by  
Associate Professor  
Dan Plunkett  
Recreation Management  
and Therapeutic Recreation



*UWL students and faculty will soon head out on the Upper Mississippi River in a new vessel. The Prairie Springs: Paul Fleckenstein Trust has funded a state-of-the-art vessel equipped to expand research in the river while training the next generation of water professionals in science, technology, engineering and math.*

# A CLEARER PATH

New collaboration boosts La Crosse as river studies leader

**A** new partnership means full steam ahead for UWL's River Studies and water research.

The Mississippi River holds the answers to numerous questions about freshwater bodies, invasive species, even climate change. But a lack of proper equipment and funding has hindered scientists' abilities to research those answers. A new community partnership funded through the La Crosse Community Foundation is changing that — and boosting La Crosse as a hub for river studies.

The community foundation has announced a collaboration that will produce academic, environmental and scientific benefits. Prairie Springs: The Paul Fleckenstein Trust is giving the La Crosse Community Foundation nearly \$500,000 to fund construction of a new research vessel for UWL's River Studies Center (RSC). Local construction, environmental services and harbor management company J.F. Brennan Co. will store, moor and maintain the vessel.

The state-of-the-art vessel will equip RSC to expand its research in the Upper Mississippi River while training the next generation of water professionals in science, technology, engineering and math, says UWL River Studies Center Director Roger Haro.

"The Research Vessel Prairie Springs initiative will significantly elevate the research and instructional stature of UWL by expanding its presence on the Upper Mississippi River," says Haro, associate



*The new research vessel will be stored, moored and maintained by J.F. Brennan Co. It's set to launch in 2023.*

dean in CSH. “That will better enable the center to compete for external funding and opportunities that are currently limited without a research vessel.”

Haro says the vessel will also strengthen and broaden the River Studies Center’s research partnerships in the community, region and beyond to help scientists better understand the impact of — and how to combat — freshwater threats such as climate change, invasive species, pollution and aging infrastructure.

The gift from Prairie Springs: Paul Fleckenstein Trust will create a designated fund whose sole purpose is to support the new vessel and associated needs, says Jamie Schloegel, executive director of the La Crosse Community Foundation. “Paul was a philanthropist at heart. Before he passed in 2011 at the age of 47, he ardently supported environmental education.”

He also had a great love for conservation programs and enjoyed being on the water, said Carolyn Scott, ’85, Fleckenstein’s sister who, with her husband Jay Scott, ’85, serve as trustees for Prairie Springs: Paul Fleckenstein Trust.

“Paul established the trust to support research and scholarship in environmental studies and education, wildlife habitat and protection, conservation and ecological technology,” notes Carolyn. “The research vessel will add another dimension to fulfilling that mission on one of the great waterways in North America.”

“As trustees, we believe Paul would be thrilled to be associated with this initiative,” she adds. “He also would be grateful for the partnership with J.F. Brennan and the creation of significant experiential learning opportunities for UWL students, research opportunities for faculty and the opportunity to advance the La Crosse community.”

The partnership with Brennan was essential to moving everyone’s vision to reality, explains Schloegel, noting the company was eager to support the initiative.

“We’re excited to be part of a public-private partnership that creates experiential learning opportunities for students,” says Brennan President and CEO Matt Binsfeld.

“In coming decades, the abundance of water (or lack thereof), water quality and its supporting infrastructure will pose some of society’s largest challenges. Solutions will be available, but they’ll depend on the availability of highly trained engineers, scientists and technicians,” he says. “We’ll need people who can reimagine and innovate to solve our water resource issues.

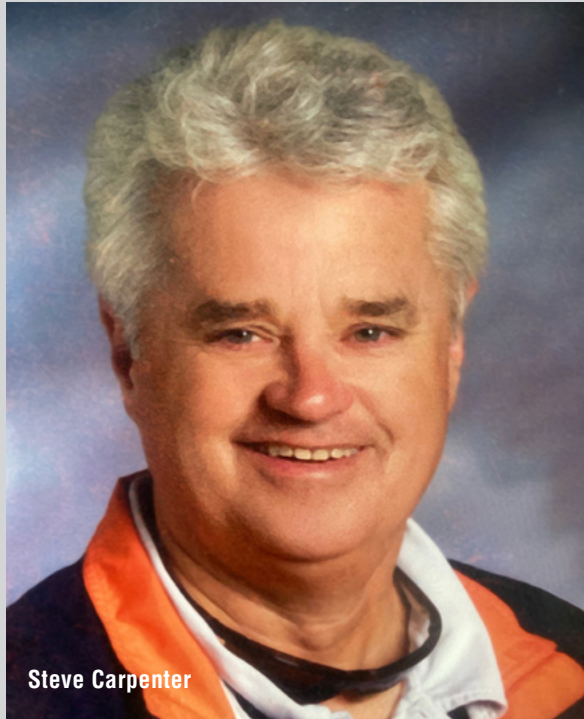
“High-quality education and workforce development are pillars on which vibrant and thriving communities are built,” he adds.



*River Studies Center Director Roger Haro says the state-of-the-art vessel will equip the River Studies Center to expand research in the Upper Mississippi River while training the next generation of water professionals in science, technology, engineering and math.*

# A LASTING LEGACY

## Waukesha gym named for alum teacher, coach



**A** longtime teacher and tennis coach in the Greater Milwaukee Area won't be forgotten.

Steve Carpenter, a 1972 graduate in physical education, excelled on UWL's tennis team, playing No. 1 singles and doubles. "Carp," as his friends called him, went on to impact thousands of youngsters and adults during his 35 years as a dedicated and caring physical education teacher and coach in the Waukesha school district. His career at Lowell Elementary ended when he died Jan. 10, 2010, following a 16-month battle with ALS.

Along with serving as head tennis coach at Waukesha South High School, Carpenter was a tennis professional at the Moorland Park Indoor Tennis Club in New Berlin, and the Olympia Resort in Oconomowoc. He spent many summers at Horeb Park in Waukesha and at Fowler Park in Oconomowoc, giving tennis lessons and working with players of all ages and abilities.

After Carpenter was diagnosed with the disease, one of his last wishes was to provide an enduring fund for students at the school where he taught, Lowell Elementary School. The Steve Carpenter Scholarship was funded through the generous contributions of his family, friends and supporters.

For several years, the scholarships provided financial resources for hard-working students at Lowell. Funding included grants for students to participate in special activities such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, auditory and verbal therapy, sports camps, music instruction, and more.

"All of these meaningful activities were provided in Steve's name through the generosity of the original contributors to the Steve Carpenter Scholarship Fund," says Bill Kirsch, '84 & '92, who took over for Carpenter at Lowell during his illness.

"To replace my dear friend and mentor was more difficult than you could ever imagine," notes Kirsch. "With Steve's blessing, I took over as physical education teacher at Lowell in Waukesha."

Following Carpenter's death, Kirsch worked with the Carpenter Family and Lowell Elementary Principal Rachel Hermann to raise funds to rehabilitate the school's gymnasium. Working with the Lowell PTO, Waukesha North Athletic Booster Club, School District of Waukesha, and Steve Carpenter Scholarship Fund supporters, Kirsch and others focused on raising funds to improve flooring and baskets, along with the sound system and stage, to create a local gathering place to empower youth and adults in the community.

On Oct. 21, 2021, the district celebrated a beautifully renovated facility, the "Carpenter Gymnasium" at Lowell Elementary School.

Kirsch says that lasting tribute is deserved for the man who impacted many and was admired for his enduring sense of humor.

"One example is how he used the 'No Child Left Behind' legislation to his own benefit in promoting physical education by handing out buttons that said, 'No Child Left on Their Behind,'" he says.

Thanks to Kirsch and others, Carpenter's story continues to inspire generations.



# Alum makes prestigious recreation list



*Matt Colwell, '21, was named to the National Recreation and Park Association's "30 under 30" list for 2022.*

**A** UWL recreation management major is one of the best in the country among the field's young professionals under 30.

Matt Colwell, '21, made the National Recreation and Park Association's "30 under 30" list for 2022. He's featured in the association's February issue.

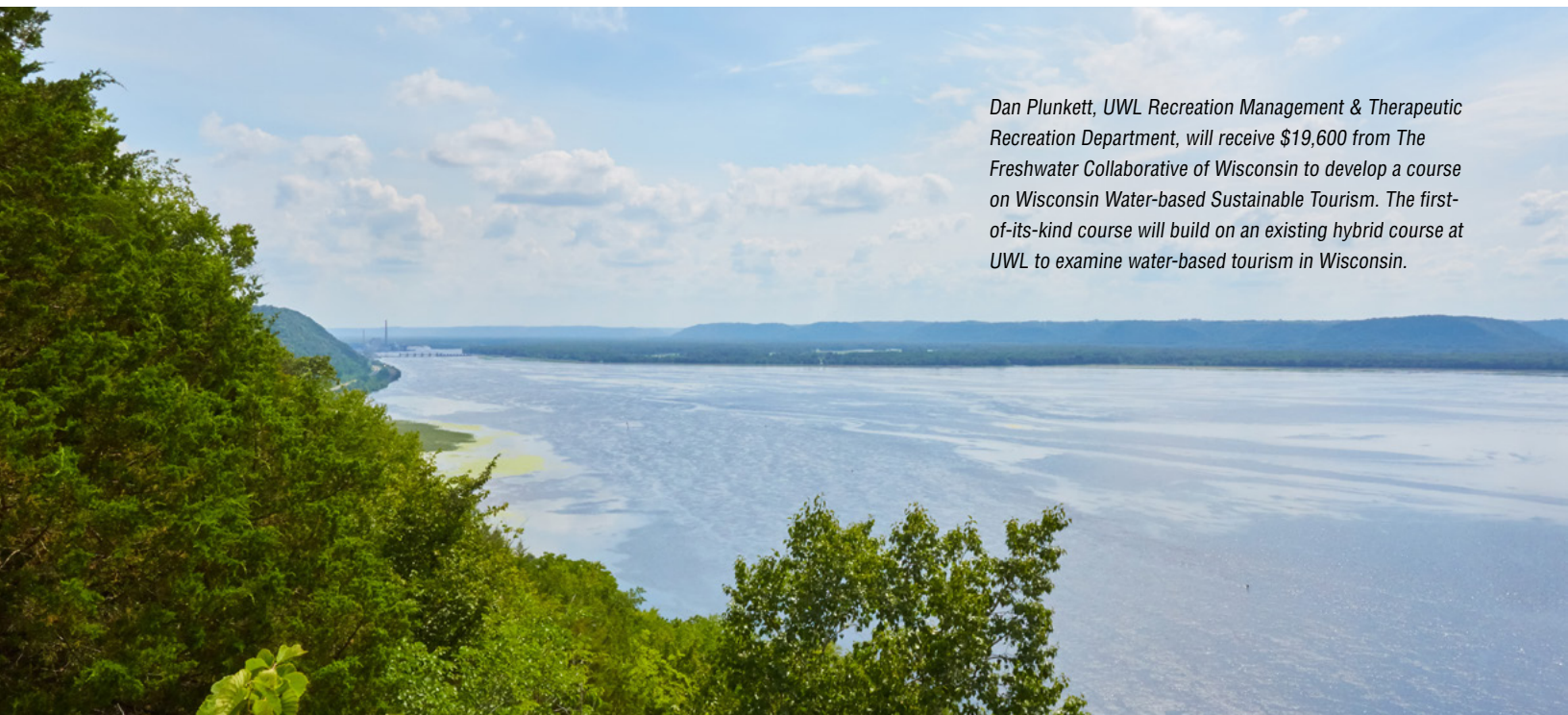
It's the second year the Parks & Recreation magazine and NRPA's Young Professional Network honored 30 of the top young park and recreation professionals in the field. More than 100 nominations were received from 27 states. The young professionals were selected based on their impact in their community, contributions to the field, and innovative ideas.

Colwell currently serves as the recreation program coordinator for the City of Mendota Heights, Minnesota. He previously was the sports and aquatics specialist for the City of New Brighton, Minnesota. He was given a full-time position after serving as temporary staff member and intern.

Associate Professor of Recreation Management and Therapeutic Recreation Brian Kumm-Schaley says it's an honor for Colwell that is well deserved.

"He was a remarkable student, and he continues to shine in his professional capacities in Minnesota and beyond," says Kumm-Schaley. "I couldn't be more proud and happy for him and what he represents in our field."

**Matt Colwell** began working for the City of New Brighton, Minnesota, as a temporary staffer in the agency's Mission Possible program. This new program offered students, whose guardians couldn't work from home during the pandemic, a place to do online learning while their caretakers were away. His impressive work earned him an internship, which led to a full-time position as sports and aquatics specialist. He brings a specialness to programs, takes on everything that is thrown at him, asks for extra opportunities to learn and seeks growth opportunities. Colwell will serve as chair for Minnesota's Young Professional and Student Network.



*Dan Plunkett, UWL Recreation Management & Therapeutic Recreation Department, will receive \$19,600 from The Freshwater Collaborative of Wisconsin to develop a course on Wisconsin Water-based Sustainable Tourism. The first-of-its-kind course will build on an existing hybrid course at UWL to examine water-based tourism in Wisconsin.*

## UWL receives \$88,600 from collaborative to train next generation of water scientists

UWL will receive \$88,600 from the from the Freshwater Collaborative of Wisconsin to develop water-based courses and a river adventure camp for students considering college. It's part of \$3.42 million to enhance water-related academic programs statewide aimed at tackling 10 grand water challenges while supporting curriculum development, undergraduate research opportunities, career development and field training experiences for water-related fields at all 13 UW Schools.

### The projects funded at UWL:

- **\$59,137 for a “My River Adventures” pre-college camp** that will target students from underrepresented and underserved backgrounds to foster recruitment, access, and aspirations for careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) — specifically water-related sectors such as biology, ecology, and aquatic science.
- **\$19,600 to develop a first-of-its-kind course on Wisconsin Water-based Sustainable Tourism** that will build on an existing hybrid UWL course to examine water-based tourism in Wisconsin.
- **\$9,863 to develop a course on Managing the Mississippi River in conjunction with UW-Platteville** that will connect students to watersheds and foster an understanding of how changes in one part of a hydrologic system impact those upstream and downstream.

UWL will also be part of a collaborative project with the Madison, Eau Claire and Platteville campuses providing summer research experiences for UW System undergraduates.

# A 3 minute plug

## Grace Vogt share face mask findings in competition

*Grace Vogt, a clinical exercise physiology graduate student, took first place in this year's 3 Minute Grad Project event.*



It's a problem many have faced during the pandemic: wearing a face mask while exercising.

Grace Vogt, a graduate student in UWL's clinical exercise physiology program, set out to determine whether masks truly make it more difficult to work out.

The project, paired with Vogt's skilled delivery, earned her a first-place finish in this spring's 3 Minute Grad Project (3MGP). The event challenges grad students to squeeze months of research into a 180-second presentation for a general audience.

"I was overjoyed and very thankful when I found out I won the competition," says Vogt, who received a \$500 scholarship for her efforts. "It's really rewarding knowing that all the hard work I've put into the research project and 3MGP competition was recognized."

Vogt's research arose from a study by her faculty advisor, Kim Radtke, an associate professor in the Exercise and Sport Science Department. Radtke had previously studied the effects of wearing a face mask during a six-minute walk test.

Building on this, Vogt recruited La Crosse community members for a multi-week trial. She monitored their self-paced exercise on a stationary bike, with and without N95 masks.

She compared overall workload, as well as heart rate and other measurements related to lung activity. She also recorded participants' perceived shortness of breath and perceived exertion.

After reviewing results from three workouts with participants, Vogt concluded that there was no significant difference in workload. However, there were increases in perceived exertion, labored breathing and end tidal carbon dioxide levels.

"Possible reasons for this include the fact that the N95 mask has a tighter face feel, which can cause increased heat and

humidity levels inside the masks, as well as increased breathing resistance," she explains. This insight can be helpful, she adds, among both exercise scientists working with clients and the general population.

The research came naturally to Vogt, who aspires to a career in cardiac rehabilitation. What proved more difficult was synthesizing months of research and mountains of information into a three-minute presentation that would be digestible and engaging for a mixed group of listeners.

"Three minutes is a very short amount of time to talk about a research project you've been working on for months," she notes.

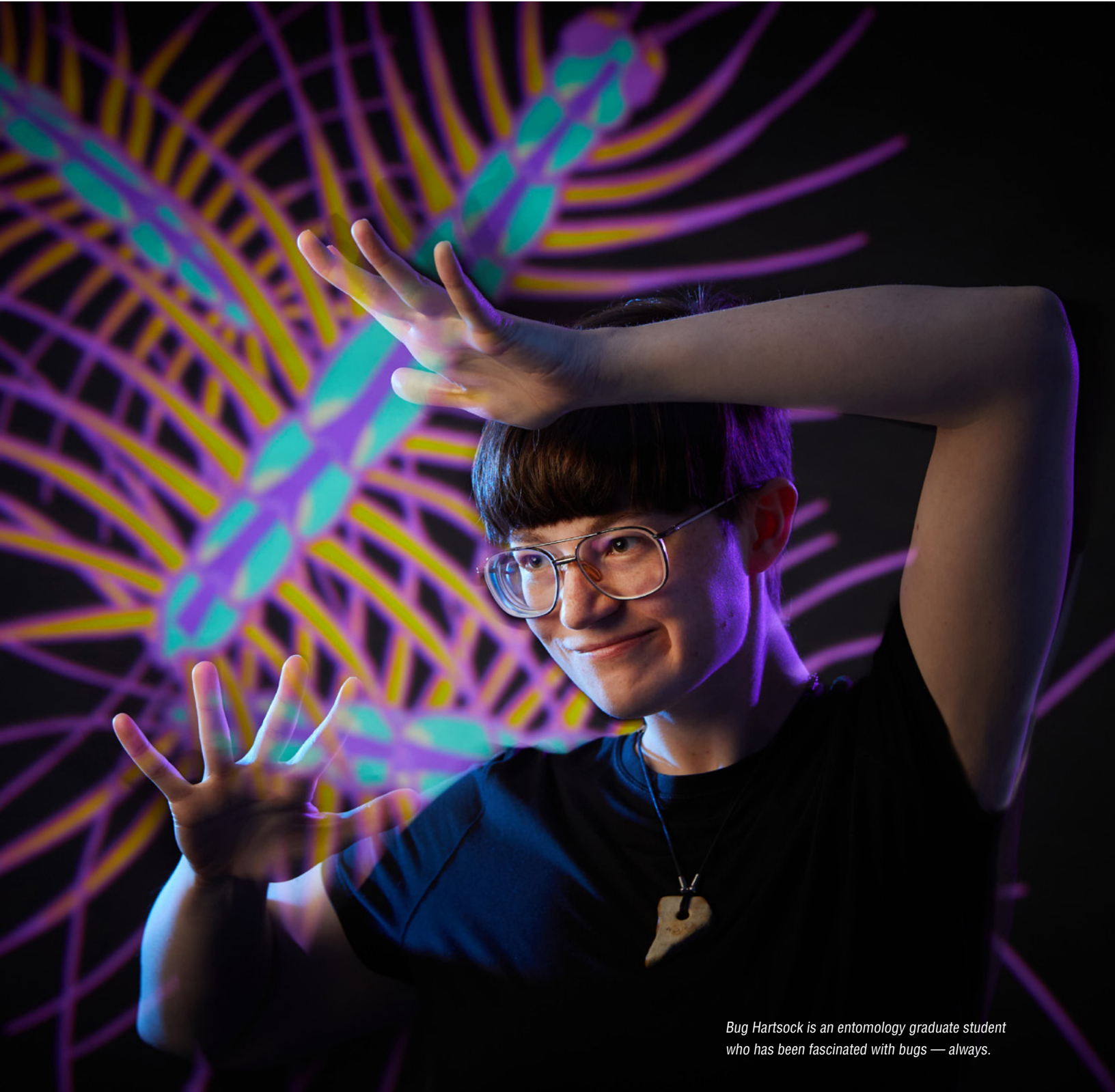
Conducting and presenting this research is just one aspect of Vogt's education in UWL's clinical exercise physiology program. Three days weekly, Vogt and her classmates also help run the university's La Crosse Exercise and Health Program — a chance to practice skills they'll need in their careers.

They also cover clinical rotations at Gundersen and Mayo health systems in La Crosse, which provides a taste of what it's like to work in the community.

"This program," Vogt says, "offers experiences that increase our knowledge and confidence in skills that will allow us to be successful when we start our first job in the field."

### About UWL Graduate & Extended Learning

UWL offers more than 20 graduate programs, including online, on-campus and blended programs in business and management; higher education; K-12 education; science, engineering and math; clinical fields; and health and wellness. [Learn more about graduate programs.](#)



*Bug Hartsock is an entomology graduate student who has been fascinated with bugs — always.*



# CALL ME BUG

Bug Hartsock shares the metamorphosis to a new name

**W**hen I was in preschool, we had a class project – keeping mealworms. They're small, squirmy little larvae of a beetle that eats decaying leaves. My favorite was one that had a slightly lighter color than all the others. I would carefully carry that particular larva around in a plastic cup. One day, a fellow preschooler approached and asked to see. He bashed the cup out of my hand.

I wish I could tell you that was the first and last time someone hurt something to upset me. But it was one of many. Young people push boundaries, and this includes inevitable poking at the sensitivities of others. My sensitivity was obvious. I would cry at even the idea of something being killed, particularly those small arthropods we casually call “bugs.”

At five, the all too classic question of what I wanted to be when I grew up was answered with a confident “entomologist!” I knew the word because I had consumed every book about insects (and their segmented, jointed-legged relatives) in my public library. My mom even set my first email account with the password “buglover” (it isn't anymore - please don't try).

I was obsessed. Maybe it was growing up in the Texas country, surrounded by an invasive bamboo forest and wood-boring beetles in our log pile. All I can say is for as long as I can remember, I was entranced by this miniature alien world. And I knew it was something I wanted to protect.

Growing up, I often convinced myself that raw vulnerabilities are better left unspoken if you don't want to get hurt. And though this may be true in the short term, it isn't an effective way to change things for the better.

Once I'd re-decided I wanted to pursue entomology (after majoring in sociology), I was told that I wouldn't be able to do science because I'm too sensitive. I was told that I'm silly for caring about animals that are “essentially robots.” In contrast, I was also told that this was of course the thing I should do – that I'd wanted it since I was a kid.

It was two years ago when I officially asked my closest friends to call me “Bug.” It was my username online, a cute nickname in childhood, but never a name. Never something official. I toyed a bit with other gender-neutral monikers, including an email that featured the name “Stevie.” But nothing ever felt like me. Except for Bug.

The greatest barrier to the legal name change was money. People, overall, were surprisingly supportive. I paid the city of La Crosse \$170.26 to file the forms. And then the La Crosse Tribune \$108.97 to publish the announcement (an odd bureaucratic requirement). It's funny that something that belongs to me more than anything else was so expensive to change.

My name is Bug Hartsock. I'm decently sensitive, and I'm an entomology graduate student. I like to draw comics about bugs. I don't take myself very seriously, and I won't believe it's a bad thing for a scientist to care.

I think it probably makes for more ethical science if killing something makes you sad. I don't want to be unfeeling and clinical. I want to be someone who can excitedly tell people I named myself after my favorite thing.

Like insects in metamorphosis, we are all changing. Though we're small, a tiny revolution begins when someone cares just a little bit more. And if enough people care, something new might take flight.

## TWO EARN TEACHING AWARDS

Two CSH faculty are among six to receive the 2022 Eagle Teaching Excellence Award, recognizing faculty for making a difference in students' lives. A campus committee selected six from more than 500 nominations.



### Maggie Laufenberg Health Professions

**Background:** Taught with the University of Washington MEDEX PA program from 2018 until joining UWL. Taught at the Anchorage, Alaska, and Kona, Hawaii, campuses. Prior to academia, worked full time clinically as a physician assistant, and now part time.

**Favorite part of teaching:** As a medical educator, I have the unique privilege of helping to shape the lives of not only my students, but the lives of their future patients. My intent is to help students develop the tools necessary to be successful clinicians, leaders and health advocates, all while contributing to good patient outcomes.



### Ben Haenni Chemistry & Biochemistry

**Background:** Earned a PhD at UW-Madison.

**Favorite part of teaching:** Ultimately, the students. Every semester, I get to meet a brand-new group of people. Getting to know my students during office hours, in the lab and chatting before class is incredibly fulfilling. In my experience at UWL, the students are intelligent, passionate, sometimes a little goofy, but always interesting. Because of the students, I have fun every day that I go into work. How cool is that?

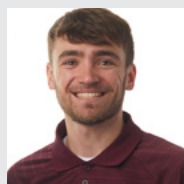


### Galbraith earns advising award

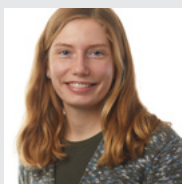
Associate Professor Anne Galbraith, Biology, has received the 2022 Eagle Excellence in Academic Advising Award, which recognizes exceptional academic advisors. Galbraith currently teaches genetics and lab, human molecular genetics and optional lab, advanced genetics, and the First Year Seminar (STEM Strong: Why Women Matter.)

## TOP HONORS

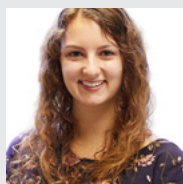
Three CSH graduates from 2021-22 were among seven recognized for academic excellence in May. They included:



Tommy Friday



Kaylan Marshall



Shayla (Michel) Victoria

**Murphy Award for Academic Excellence** recognizes the university's top graduating scholar, as chosen by committee.

**Tommy Friday** graduated with a bachelor's majoring in exercise and sport science - physical education teaching, with a minor in adapted physical education teaching. He was on the Dean's List every semester and maintained a 4.0 GPA. Friday earned numerous scholarships and received the Wisconsin Health and Physical Education Future Professionals Leadership Award. The 2021 Physical Education Major of the Year is from Pine River.

## TWO CSH GRADS AMONG DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI

The UWL Alumni Association is honoring two CSH graduates for distinguished service and successful careers. They return to campus in September to be recognized and speak with students and in a panel. **Get the details.**



**The Maurice O. Graff Distinguished Alumni Award** recognizes outstanding achievement of alumni bringing honor and distinction to the university.

### **Bryan Heiderscheit, '94**

- Recognized worldwide for integrity, passion, creativity and innovation in sports medicine.
- Frederick Gaenslen Professor in Orthopedics and Vice-Chair for Research, Department of Orthopedics and Rehabilitation, University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health.
- 2020 Excellence in Research Award, American Academy of Sports Physical Therapy; 2019 Catherine Worthingham Fellow of the American Physical Therapy Association; others.
- Bachelor's in physical therapy, 1994; master's, 1998, and doctorate, 2000, University of Massachusetts.



**Parker Distinguished Multicultural Alumni Award** recognizes alumni who have contributed significantly to improving multicultural understanding on the campus and in their careers.

### **Marquell Johnson, '04**

- Impactful instructor, author and researcher in disabilities, adapted physical education and activity.
- Professor, Department of Kinesiology, UW-Eau Claire.
- 2019 Outstanding Contributor Award for Access UW System; 2017 Dr. Ron Satz Teacher/Scholar Award, UW-Eau Claire; others.
- Master's in exercise and sport science, adapted physical education, 2004; bachelor's, Huntingdon College, 2001; doctorate, Oregon State University, 2008.

**Strzelczyk Award in Science and Health** recognizes an outstanding CSH senior for academic achievement, and campus and community service.

**Kaylan Marshall** graduated with a bachelor's majoring in microbiology and minoring in chemistry. She was on the Dean's List each semester and maintained a 4.0 GPA. Marshall earned an Eagle Apprenticeship and went on to receive numerous campus scholarships. The track athlete is from Sun Prairie.

**Rosandich Graduate Thesis and Dissertation Award** recognizes the best graduate thesis, based on originality, impact and writing quality.

**Shayla (Michel) Victoria** earned a Master of Science in Biology in May 2021. Her research explored how two fish species — zebrafish and fathead minnows — are being affected by Thiamethoxam, an insecticide often used in agriculture. She is currently pursuing doctorate at the University of Mississippi.



## Students organize digital scavenger hunt

It was only a matter of time before an outdoor scavenger hunt went online. Physical Therapy majors ran a citywide scavenger hunt in April, offering an opportunity to get outdoors, explore the community and win prizes.

Each of the three weeks featured a new location — Chad Erickson Memorial Park, the marsh trails near Myrick Park and Pettibone Park. Participants completed missions of uploading photos and video, answering questions and showing off creativity.

“It gave us the opportunity to take a break from our studies and pushed us to use our critical thinking in other ways,” says organizer Mikey Friedman.