

EAGLEEDGE

LEAD. EDUCATE. COLLABORATE. INNOVATE.

VOLUME 7 | ISSUE 1 | SUMMER 2020



COVID-19 is an unprecedented challenge for student teachers. How have they responded? And what does it mean for the future?



Learning — and
teaching — as they go

Page 4



A woman of many hats

Page 8



Celebrating multicultural
teacher graduates

Page 11



Teachers should be
flexible and forgiving
amid COVID-19

Page 12



IPSE helps 34 teachers
earn their Reading Teacher
Certificate

Page 14

Volume 7 | Issue 1

Summer 2020 | *Eagle Edge* is

published biannually for

UW-La Crosse School of Education

alumni and friends.

Direct comments to:

Dean Marcie Wycoff-Horn

UWL School of Education

1725 State St.

La Crosse, WI 54601 USA

608.785.6786

mwycoff-horn@uwlax.edu

Editor:

Tammy Chandler

Writers:

Kyle Farris

Kjerstin Lang

Mai Chao Duddeck

Art Director:

Dave Piro

Photography:

Michael Lieurance, '02

The University of Wisconsin-La Crosse is an affirmative action/ equal opportunity employer and is in compliance with Title IX and Section 504.

uwlax.edu/soe





Marcie Wycoff-Horn, Ph.D.

As I reflect on the past academic year, the word “perseverance” seems to fit 2019-20 best. Perseverance requires us to apply all of our School of Education values: to educate, lead, innovate, and collaborate. Our students, faculty, staff, and partners demonstrated the ability and the will to keep going in the face of continuous challenges in order to educate future teachers. Faculty, staff, and school partners demonstrated the ability to stay

focused and lead in the midst of various distractions, while the coronavirus pandemic swept across our nation. Furthermore, in recent weeks, the country’s attention has been turned to anti-racism, which continues to be a focus of our work in the School of Education. In a recent state of solidarity, I shared the following:

The anti-racism work ahead of us has never been more important. We are committed to placing the elimination of systemic racism at the core of our collective strategic planning and educator preparation work. We see you and we are here for you. Our school’s commitment to social justice and equity positions us with a vision where classrooms, communities, families, and children can thrive rather than be negatively impacted by racism. We have a responsibility to disrupt and dismantle the deeply ingrained racial injustice that still exists today in society and the educational system.

An example of this work is our continued, intentional efforts to recruit more people of color into the education profession. The School of Education’s Senior Equity Advisor/Recruiter section of the newsletter highlights seven new multicultural graduates of the School of Education who are entering the teaching profession. Please join me in congratulating them on this accomplishment and welcoming them into the teaching force. Our School of Education

was a leader in the state in offering the exciting opportunity to participate in an all-day workshop to help faculty, staff, and students learn more about Act 31 or the history, culture, and tribal sovereignty of Wisconsin’s American Indian nations.

Faculty, staff, students, alumni, and school/community partners demonstrated flexibility, forgiveness, and an ability to always find the silver lining in situations that are less than ideal. As you explore the newsletter, you will also read about how educators’ hearts and minds came together and worked hard to support children and families under extreme circumstances. The desire to innovate their practice through virtual learning required taking risks and sometimes resulted in failures. However, like any successful person, faculty, staff, students, and school/community partners reflected on these experiences and approaches, learning from each failure to reach more successful outcomes next time. Student teachers are highlighted in this issue, specifically their ability to collaborate and respond as their experience was moved from a physical space to a virtual one for the last half of the school year.

Finally, let me recognize and celebrate the amazing partners, donors, and friends of the School of Education. We would be in a different place without your ongoing support and trust in the work we do to ensure UWL continues to be out in front preparing educators to meet the needs of children, families, and communities. As one example of this generosity, the newsletter highlights the largest gift ever received by the UWL School of Education. The Alice M. Svec Endowment in Education brought over \$1.3 million of support through scholarships. What an investment in the profession! I hope you understand the value of our partnership in this work together and enjoy the Summer 2020 Eagle Edge.

UWL Proud,


Marcie Wycoff-Horn, Dean

VIRTUAL Learning

Brianna Schyvinck, who student taught in a fourth grade classroom at Spence Elementary in La Crosse, thought of creative ways, such as exchanging pen pal letters, to keep her students engaged while they learned from home.

Brianna Schyvinck



LEARNING— AND TEACHING— AS THEY GO

UWL student teachers
rise to the challenge
of COVID-19

The next wave of new teachers will have one thing in common: adaptability.

Well, make that two things: adaptability, and an unfaltering commitment to students in times of crisis.

COVID-19 has been tremendously disruptive for students and teachers, but especially for student teachers, whose first opportunities to help lead a classroom were halted, uprooted and relocated to virtual formats — all in a matter of days.

“I couldn’t believe that it was actually happening,” says Brianna Schyvinck, who was student teaching in Sarah Blanton’s fourth grade classroom at Spence Elementary in La Crosse. “I was concerned about how students were going to react, and how we could keep them calm and reassure them that everything was going to be OK.”

Schyvinck and Blanton spent that Monday and Tuesday the same way other teachers did: preparing homework materials and giving students a crash course in Google Classroom and other technology.

It wasn’t until the end of the first week that Schyvinck was able to take a step back and breathe.

“It was all about being flexible and staying calm for the students,” she explains. “After the chaotic first week, students were getting the hang of their new routines and learning formats.”

Many K-12 classrooms have used a mix of Google Classroom, a web service that allows teachers to share and grade assignments, and periodic Zoom calls to keep students engaged and on task.

But for that to work, students require access to the right technology.

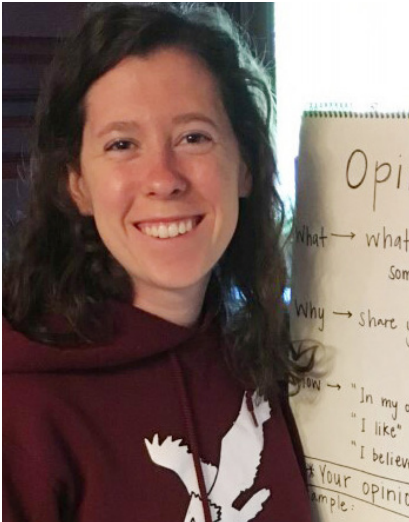
“We were fearful because there are so many students who live in areas without internet, because it doesn’t reach them, it’s spotty, or they can’t afford it,” says Maggie Berry, who was assigned to Andy Bloom’s language and social studies classrooms at Royall Middle School in Elroy.

To ensure all students could continue learning, the school sent Chromebooks home with students, provided hotspots, and connected families with internet companies providing free connections.

“It really was a group effort to make this sustainable,” Berry says.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE



Danielle Pratt

UWL student teachers and their cooperating teachers have taken a number of steps to shift classes and assignments to online formats.

In many cases, they simplified or streamlined assignments.

They focused more on large concepts and less on nitty-gritty details.

And they asked students, through their daily work, to reflect on life amid COVID-19.

"I have been intentional about creating writing prompts for students that give them a platform to share how this season of life is for them and connect to them personally," explains Danielle Pratt, who was student teaching in Tom Sullivan's fifth grade classroom at Northside Elementary in La Crosse. "The daily writing assignments have been a great way for me to hear from the students and teach them how to become strong writers."

This crisis has underscored the importance of teachers and students connecting on a personal level, student teachers say.

Stacey Smith, who was student teaching alongside Paula Charron of Longfellow Middle School in La Crosse, says she made a more intentional effort to be positive and uplifting when talking with students.

"I make sure to use positive and encouraging language while keeping the lessons accessible — for example, by making sure every student has access to certain art materials at home," she says. "I try to keep lesson feedback both constructive and encouraging. I want to provide value by making sure good learning is taking place while also being realistic about the current circumstances."

Many have found creative ways to boost classroom morale and create a sense of togetherness, even as their actual classrooms sit empty.

Berry started a video series called "Mrs. Berry's Minute," in which she updated students about interesting things she found online or in the news.

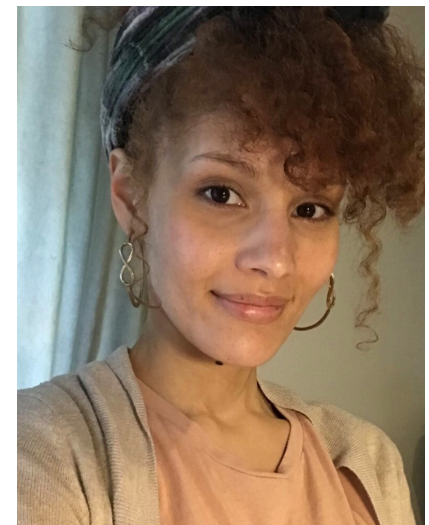
She also recorded a virtual tour of her family's farm, because a class field trip to a dairy farm had to be canceled.

Meanwhile, Schyvinck shared TikTok dances she recorded at home with her sisters, and even became pen pals with some of her students.

"The most rewarding part of this experience is to see my students' faces," says Schyvinck, who's gotten into the habit of playing charades or 20 questions with them, virtually. "I think back to the short time we had

together in the classroom, and I will cherish those memories. But I will also use this experience to create lasting relationships with my students."

If student teaching is meant to prepare aspiring educators for anything a classroom might throw at them, then this year's student teachers will be better prepared than most.



Stacey Smith

The events of this spring, they say, pushed them to think critically about what students should know and know how to do, to exercise flexibility and compassion, to communicate more frequently with families, and to improve their understanding of technology.

One thing COVID-19 has not done is dull their passion for teaching. It's an enthusiasm, they say, that their students seem to share.

"Honestly, it's been so nice to hear that students miss school," Berry says. "I think this will be a nice reminder of how important schools are for children and how impactful we can be."

Maggie Berry, who student taught at Royall Middle School in Elroy, took her students on a virtual tour of her family's farm after the class' field trip to a dairy farm was canceled due to COVID-19.

Maggie Berry





A woman of many hats

Former teacher, healthcare worker
cared for the community's young and
old. Her estate gift will support
future educators forever

Alice Svec

They miss the sight of Alice Svec, wearing one of her fancy hats, walking through the glass door of 533 Main St., La Crosse. Svec was well known in the community, friendly, and brilliant, say fellow knitters at the Fitting Knit Shop downtown. She always had something new on her mind to share as she stepped in that door.

“She was unique, eccentric, and fascinating to talk to because she had such a history,” says Mimi Saterbak, '68, shop co-owner. That history included a career as an elementary education teacher and later a healthcare worker. She traveled the world extensively. She had a strong artistic drive and many hobbies — whether felting, painting, or embroidering.

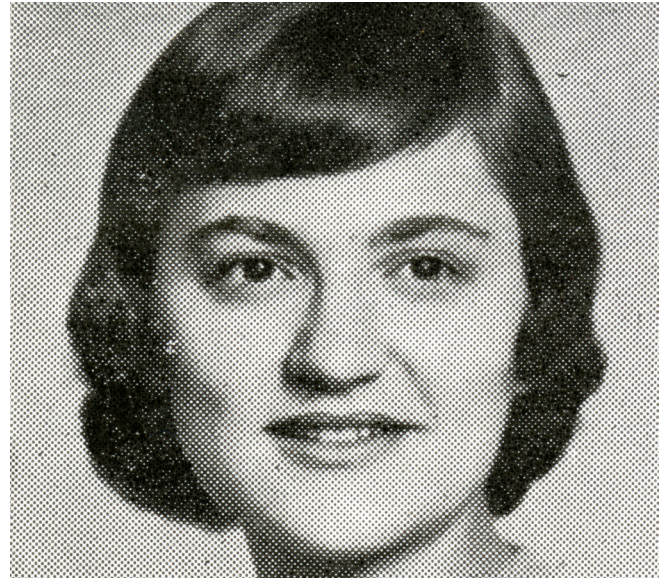
Svec also had a big heart. As a visiting nurse later in her career, she learned of a patient's cravings for homemade mac and cheese. So, after the long workday, Svec went home and prepared a batch to deliver. That kind of care for others wasn't out of the ordinary. She served up dishes for community dinners and knit winter hats for children.

Svec, '59, also saw needs among college students. Sitting around the knitting table in the back of the Fitting Knit Shop, she'd often share how she struggled to pay her own way through college at Wisconsin State College at La Crosse in the late 1950s working as a nanny and housekeeper. She wanted to help future students pay their way, particularly in elementary education.

“This was on her mind for many, many years,” says Mimi. “I just want to thank her and say, ‘You did it.’ Her wishes became a reality.”

When Svec died in May 2019, a planned \$1.3 million gift from her estate was donated to the UW-La Crosse Foundation. It will be used to create the Alice M. Svec Endowed Scholarship in Education. The largest gift ever to the School of Education benefits elementary education majors. The first \$40,000 in scholarships will be awarded in the spring. Svec, who inspired young students in her career, will now support future educators forever.

“At UWL we have an excellent teacher preparation program that is helping our state meet a strong demand for quality teachers. Alice Svec's forward-thinking investment in future teachers will not only help students



Alice Svec, '59

in our program, it will have a ripple effect, making a teaching degree more accessible,” says Marcie Wycoff-Horn, dean of UWL's School of Education, Professional and Continuing Education. “It will ultimately help prepare more teachers to work in this important profession in our state and beyond.”

Lynn Saterbak, '66, Fitting Knit Shop co-owner and the personal representative for the estate, says Svec had close friends connected to UWL. She also found her place there as a student, which is likely why she thought of UWL in her estate.

“I think UWL was a good experience for her. It was very important to her,” says Mimi. “I think she felt she fit in. She felt comfortable at UWL.”

Remember UWL in your financial plans

By remembering the UWL Foundation in your estate and financial plans, you will make a lasting difference for the university and open new doors to future generations. Visit the UWL Foundation Planned and Estate Giving website to learn more at uwlax.mylegacygift.org

INCORPORATING & UNDERSTANDING **ACT 31**

Pre-service teachers learned about history, culture, and tribal sovereignty of Wisconsin's American Indian nations during all-day session

David O'Connor, Department of Public Instruction American Indian Studies program consultant, hosted the training, which aimed to help pre-service teachers learn how to integrate American Indian Studies into lesson plans, material selections, pedagogical practices, and district curricula.

Pre-service teachers say a Wisconsin Act 31 workshop in November helped them see the importance of incorporating Native American culture and history into all aspects of their future students' education — not simply a special unit.

Viterbo and UW-La Crosse students came together for the all-day session to understand and implement Act 31, the state law that requires all public school districts and pre-service teacher programs to provide instruction on the history, culture, and tribal sovereignty of Wisconsin's American Indian nations and tribal communities.

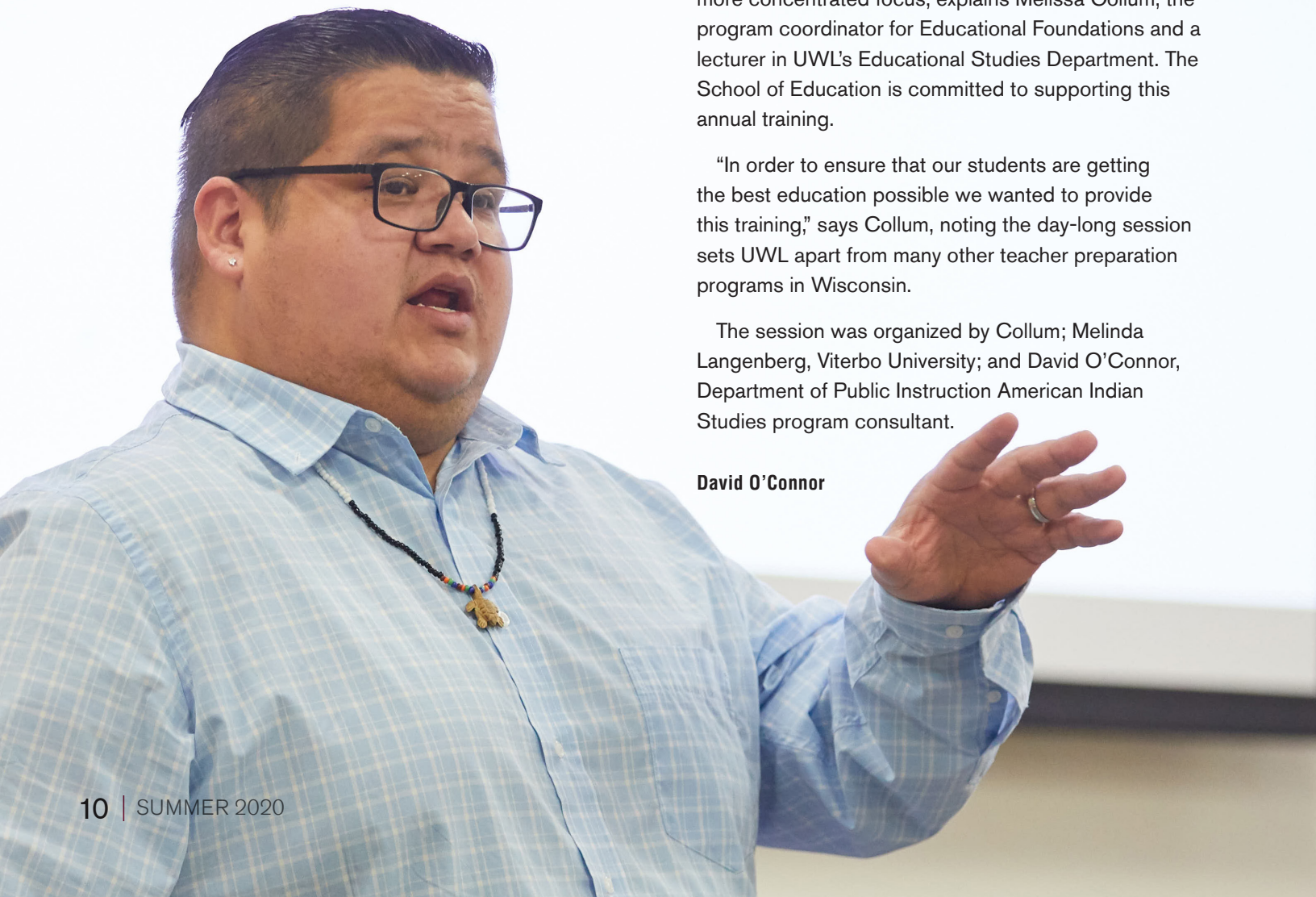
"The passion that was conveyed through the presentation is not something that a simple assignment could have provided," says Tarah Malotky, an early childhood-middle childhood education major. "Not only were we given answers to the questions that we had regarding how to teach, but we were also shown how to access the resources that would guide us through these vital topics in our classrooms."

Act 31 training is infused into School of Education curricula; however, students expressed a desire for a more concentrated focus, explains Melissa Collum, the program coordinator for Educational Foundations and a lecturer in UWL's Educational Studies Department. The School of Education is committed to supporting this annual training.

"In order to ensure that our students are getting the best education possible we wanted to provide this training," says Collum, noting the day-long session sets UWL apart from many other teacher preparation programs in Wisconsin.

The session was organized by Collum; Melinda Langenberg, Viterbo University; and David O'Connor, Department of Public Instruction American Indian Studies program consultant.

David O'Connor



Celebrating multicultural teacher graduates

By Mai Chao Duddeck



Charlie Yang

One of the most critical decisions for college students is deciding what career to pursue in higher education. Thinking back to 2001, becoming an educator was important to me, because I wanted to share my artistic gifts with students. Did you know in 2016, I was one of 2,790 multicultural teachers out of the 58,347 teachers in Wisconsin? Villegas and Irvine's (2010) research study found multicultural educators served as role models for all students. As role models, they helped improve students' academic outcomes by providing a strong sense of belonging and by creating a positive school experience for them to thrive. We are proud to be a part of our multicultural students' higher education journey as they complete their academic programs.

I would like to congratulate these multicultural teacher candidates who recently completed their education programs: Charlie Yang, Emily Virata, Grace Korthals, Kiara Geiger,

Stacey Smith, Tae-Hwan Kim, and Ty Washington. I am thrilled to highlight Charlie, Emily, Stacey, and Tae.

Charlie Yang is a middle childhood-early adolescence major with an English education minor. He has accepted an eighth grade English teaching position at Meyer Middle School in River Falls, Wisconsin. As a graduate, Charlie said, "Trust yourself and be ready to take on the FoRT, Praxis II, and edTPA!"

Emily Virata is a middle childhood-early adolescence major with an earth science education minor. She is currently seeking a teaching position in the greater La Crosse area. One of her best experiences in the School of Education was participating in the Milwaukee Urban Experience (MUE) for Field 1. She remarked, "Everyone should do this experience if they are able to!"

Stacey Smith (featured on page 6) is an art education major. Stacey is our second Grow Our Own-Teacher



Emily Virata



Tae-Hwan Kim

Diversity program graduate and is exploring her employment opportunities. She said, "There is always a place for you. Find where that place is and, if you can't find it, then create it and open the door for other people to join you."

Tae-Hwan Kim is an English education major who has accepted a middle school teaching position with Hope Christian Schools in Milwaukee. He said, "Being a UWL student and specifically a School of Education student has helped me so much over the past few years. Everyone within that program has really helped me realize that I belong in front of a classroom. They've tried to get me in a classroom as soon as possible and made sure every step along the way goes as smoothly as possible."

Congratulations to all of our Spring 2020 graduates. We are honored to have you and proud of your achievements. Best wishes as you continue to make a difference in the lives of others in your communities.



Jillian Medugno, '18

Alum:

Teachers should be flexible and forgiving amid COVID-19

EDITOR'S NOTE: Jillian Medugno graduated from UWL in 2018 with a degree in early childhood-middle childhood education. She was teaching in Mandalay, Myanmar, in December 2019, when she had to return home due to health issues. Medugno's story of recovery, and her emphasis on self-care and shared understanding, can serve as a lesson for teachers and students navigating the COVID-19 landscape.

In October, I wrote a blog post about how I was living the dream by teaching internationally. In December, I frantically packed my bags after escalating health problems that could not be adequately handled in a developing country. I returned to the United States crushed by a feeling of failure, disappointed about what could have been, and lonely due to effectively self-isolating because of my health.

In many ways, everyone is now facing situations very similar to the one I encountered several months ago. Trust me — I know this is a monumental adjustment. I also know that the School of Education and my interactions with children have taught me many things that have helped me stay grounded in these uncertain times. I hope these reminders bring you some amount of comfort.

Children know you care about them, and they care about you!

Even if you're not meeting in person, students know you are still rooting for them. They are likely at home thinking of you, and maybe they are even excited about the next time they get to go to

school. I have been teaching online, and so many students have told me about their amazing teachers who they miss every day.

Children can learn in the future!

It's hard to let go and accept that some students may not have access to adequate instruction. It's frustrating that gaps in education will likely grow. However, school will resume in the future, and we will once again meet students where they are, while doing everything in our power to support them.

It's OK to be upset! You can be frustrated that the class play you organized was canceled. You can be disappointed that your placement is ending differently than you expected. And you can be angry that you had to call off a trip you had planned. Your emotions are valid, and you should let yourself experience them.

Your professors are supporting you! Your professors have rearranged spaces in their homes, adjusted their assignments, and responded to many emails. They are doing their best to

give you a quality education during this unprecedented time. They are also working to ensure you can continue your journey to becoming a teacher in the future.

You don't need to be a superhero!

Try your best to complete assignments and adjust your plans to support students, but take time to relax, too. Your mental health is important. No one knows how long this will continue, and it is important to be ready for a marathon, not just a sprint. If you need to take a bath, sit in the cool air on the porch, or mindlessly watch some weird show on Netflix, give yourself space to do that.

I am sending good vibes to everyone! Stay safe, stay sane, and remember one of the most important qualities in a teacher is flexibility.

The Institute for Professional Studies in Education (ISPE) helps 34 teachers continue graduate education

IPSE envisions a world where all educators empathetically build more authentic, diverse, and impactful relationships as they prepare our next generation of caring servant leaders.

In 2019, Fast Forward Grant money became available through the Department of Workforce Development. These funds were available to school districts to fund teachers' professional development in reading. UWL's IPSE program successfully assisted the Tomah Area School District through the application process. The Mauston School District also received funds through the grant and asked if teachers in the district could also participate in IPSE's reading programs. In 2019, IPSE reached out to other school districts to make them aware of this grant opportunity. If additional grant money becomes available in the future, Markos hopes to partner with other school districts for this opportunity.

The Tomah Area School District successfully received a grant worth \$123,100. IPSE and the Tomah Area School District collaborated in preparing and submitting this grant. This grant, along with resources provided by the school district, will or have funded 20 teachers at \$6,000 each to participate in our 1316 Reading Teacher Certification program.

The Mauston School District successfully received a grant worth \$113,000. Through close collaboration between IPSE and the school district, 14 teachers are participating in our 1316 Reading Teacher Certification program. This grant is significant for this school district because it covers the full cost of tuition for these 14 teachers.

Our 1316 Reading Teacher Certification program helps prepare working teachers for advanced preparation in reading, so every student has the opportunity to learn this important life skill. This cutting-edge program has been collaboratively designed by the School of Education faculty and staff to align with best practices and current research in the field.

Allowing teachers to continue their professional development gives them the resources and knowledge to become an effective educator. They can then create a world where every child can learn and find happiness by chasing their dreams and passions.

To learn more about IPSE's mission, vision, and values visit the IPSE website. uwlax.edu/grad/professionalstudies-in-education/about-us/mission-and-values





Make a gift that impacts generations

Most retirement plans are highly taxed when transferred to heirs - by nearly 40%.

If you designate UWL School of Education as a beneficiary of some of your retirement plan you can:

- Leave other, less heavily taxed assets to your family
- Take action without the expense of an attorney by requesting a change of beneficiary form from your plan provider
- Change your beneficiaries at any time, retaining maximum flexibility

INTERESTED?

Contact Tracey Gaskin
Senior Development Officer
UWL Foundation
120 Cleary Alumni & Friends Center
608.785.5328
tgaskin@uwlax.edu

UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN
LA CROSSE
FOUNDATION