



CAPSTONE

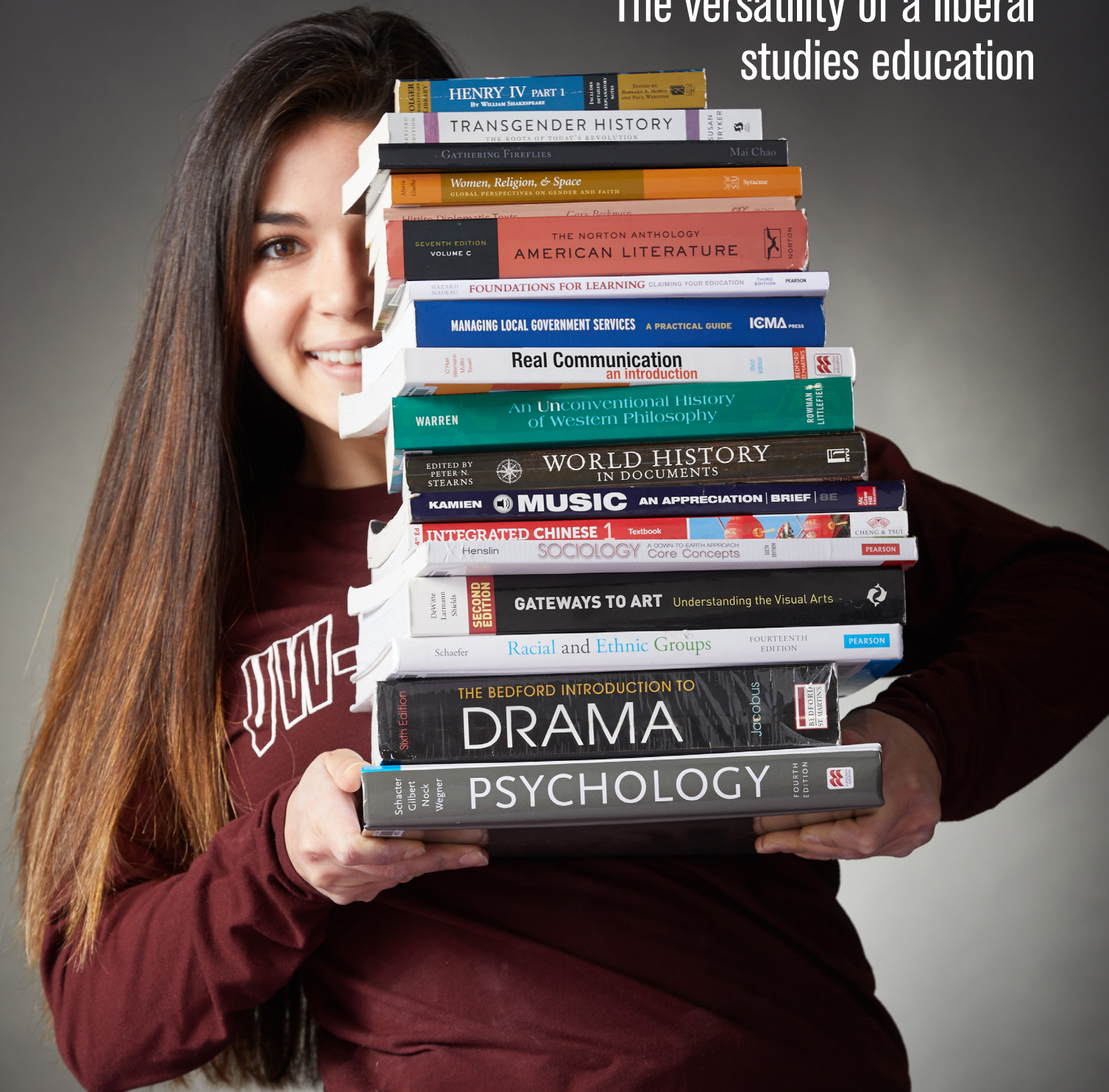
UWL COLLEGE OF LIBERAL STUDIES NEWSLETTER

INSPIRING | ACHIEVING | UNITING

FALL 2018

A SOLID FOUNDATION

The versatility of a liberal studies education





HAVE EDUCATION, WILL ADJUST

Liberal studies education is valuable

“What are you going to do with that?”

As the career advisor for students in CLS, “What can I do with my major?” is the question I am asked most frequently. This question makes my job both easier and much more difficult. The answer of course is, “Whatever you want!”

To most of you, it’s no secret that versatility is synonymous with a liberal arts education. However, this very quality can intimidate students, who hear the inevitable question, “What are you going to do with that?”

One of the best parts of my job is watching our students apply the skills they’ve honed on our campus in wonderfully diverse ways. CLS alumni can be found spanning a myriad of careers and industries. Filtering

through data from our First Destination Surveys — Career Services’ job placement study — is an excellent illustration.

Here is a sample of titles from 2017-18 CLS alums: digital marketing coordinator, cultural resources assistant, electronic theft analyst, crisis response specialist, software developer, merchandiser and business development representative. This doesn’t even touch on the large percentage of the cohort continuing their education internationally.

Our grads work for school districts, financial institutions, hospitals and clinics, sports teams, tech startups, all levels of government, and any type of nonprofit you can think of. Furthermore, the fluidity and

easy marketability of their degrees allows them to be on the cutting edge of the workforce, taking – or even creating – jobs that have never existed before.

If you have never browsed the LinkedIn Alumni Tool, I highly recommend taking time to see what our graduates are doing. It’s also a great way to help our current students explore avenues they may have overlooked as they consider their own options. Perhaps seeing the possibilities in practice will make that question a bit less anxiety-inducing.

Aiyana Dettmann

Communication Studies, 2012
Student Affairs Administration, 2014

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THINK B4U PRINT: This online newsletter has many handy, direct links to videos and websites. Printed copies don't contain hyperlink information. You may download and print this publication through ISSUU.com.

Capstone is published biannually for UWL College of Liberal Studies alumni and friends. Send comments to Marie Moeller, UWL College of Liberal Studies at mmoeller@uwlax.edu.

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Liberal arts



Talk back



Barbizon bestowal



Cuba and contradictions

CLS DEPARTMENTS

Learn more about our departments and programs:

Archaeology/Anthropology

Art

Communication Studies

English

Ethnic & Racial Studies

History

Military Science

Global Cultures & Languages

Music

Philosophy

Political Science/Public Administration

Psychology

Sociology

Student Affairs Administration

Theatre Arts

Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies

English Rhetoric and Writing and art double major Emiko Wilks, pictured here and on the cover, is among the College of Liberal Studies students who take advantage of the versatility of studying liberal studies. Along with being on the UWL Women's Gymnastics team, Wilks traveled to Ireland last summer to study. A total of 34 percent of CLS seniors say they've studied abroad — well above the national average of 14 percent.



YOU'RE WHAT?

Arts! Social Sciences! Humanities! Employers want liberal arts skills and knowledge!

College of Liberal Studies students have heard it more than once: “What are you going to do with that major?” It’s easy to see why the answer should be: “A lot!”

In a 2014 survey, the Association of American Colleges and Universities found that 93 percent of employers agree that a candidate’s demonstrated capacity to think critically, communicate clearly, and solve complex problems is more important than their undergraduate major.

The survey also found that four out of five employers agree that all students should acquire broad knowledge in the liberal arts and sciences.

CLS faculty integrate into their classrooms firsthand knowledge of how a liberal studies degree has helped them in their careers and life. They also share how the versatility of receiving a liberal studies education can make such a difference.

Faculty recognized during last spring’s CLS Excellence Awards share the impact of liberal studies.

CLS students interviewed local and global business leaders, asking them “What is a quality necessary for success in your organization?” Business leaders said: diversity, passion, problem solving, relationships, versatility and more.



See for yourself

“As a public historian I’m interested in documenting the past and the present with an eye toward the future,” says Ariel Beaujot, associate professor of history.



Ariel Beaujot

Associate Professor, History
At UWL since 2012

What tip would you share on how you’ve been successful at UWL?

My success has come from getting to know the visions of those both at the university and the wider community to create collaboration amongst those working towards a stronger and more integrated community.

How has your liberal studies education helped you achieve career goals?

I know that making change isn’t something that you can do alone and my background as a historian has taught me that all social changes come from a variety of people — both facilitators and leaders — and I have learned through my education to be both as required.

What is the value of your discipline to the larger context?

As a public historian I’m interested in documenting the past and the present with an eye toward the future. I see history not only as a study of the past, but a discipline that can help us move into an informed future.



Megan Strom

Assistant Professor of Spanish,
Global Cultures and Languages
At UWL since 2017

How has a liberal studies education proven to add versatility in your career?

I was only one class away from a music major as an undergraduate student. As soon as I chose to focus on linguistics in graduate school, I thought that all of that work (and to be honest, all of that money) was for nothing. But I see my music major

popping up all of the time in my teaching today. All of those years of dedication to music gives me a different frame for understanding things that my study of linguistics does not, so now I understand how valuable those studies were. I use all of my knowledge of language variation, language policy, language and power, and language in society (just to name a few) to teach future medical and business professionals how to communicate ethically in cross-cultural settings.

What do you tell students who are considering a liberal studies education – why should they consider liberal studies courses/majors? How will they give them an edge in the workforce?

There are so many instances in my life today where I find myself thinking how grateful I am to have studied music and a number of other topics as an undergraduate student because of the mindset and critical thinking skills they taught me.

Jonathan Borja, Assistant Professor of Music, says we can hear a change is going to happen in the music before it happens in history.

Jonathan Borja

Assistant Professor,
Music Department
At UWL since 2015

How has a liberal studies education proven to add versatility in your career?

Making a connection between music and history, one can see and hear the trends in human behavior throughout time. Often, we can hear a change is going to happen in the music before it happens in history. Listening to the dramatically dissonant music from the early decade of the 20th century, students typically don't know what to make of them. These trends go completely against what we understand as beautiful music, and yet they are announcing World War I.

What do you tell students considering a liberal studies education — why should they consider liberal studies courses/majors? How will that give them an edge in the workforce?

If you've ever performed (theater or music), you develop problem-solving skills in the moment (art is happening in real time). You also develop a sense of accountability that is part of being an independent artist and a part of a team. These are tremendous skills to develop.





Kate Parker

Associate Professor, English
Director of the Institute for
Social Justice and Special
Assistant to the Provost—
Strategic Planning
At UWL since 2012

What tip would you share on how you've been successful at UWL?

Surround yourself with people who inspire, delight and challenge you — they will always prompt your best work.

How has your liberal studies education helped you achieve career goals?

My formative intellectual experiences reading literature, theory and philosophy taught me the two most important lessons of my professional life: the first being I can learn anything and the second being but I really know nothing. The first lesson inspires the kind of intellectual confidence we should want for every college graduate — the initiative and capacity to tackle even the thorniest of problems. But the second is a crucial reminder to stay hungry, to embrace failure, to keep asking questions, to seek out other

thinkers and ideas and opinions. You really don't want one without the other.

How do you share the message of the versatility of a liberal studies education?

As an instructor, I try to stress the more holistic aspects of education in my classroom. You learn content, sure, but I also want my students to apply the insights from the texts they are reading to their own personal and professional lives.

What is the value of your discipline to the larger context?

I love teaching literature because it encourages the practice of empathy in a world that desperately needs more of this quality. I teach for the same reason that I read: to better understand the lives of those around me, often radically different from my own.



Alysa Remsburg

Lecturer, Environmental
Studies Program
At UWL since 2013

What tip would you share on how you've been successful at UWL?

Relationships with people off campus have helped me offer examples in classes, set up field trips, guest speakers, student projects and internships.

How has your liberal studies education helped you achieve career goals?

Among other things, my education helped me become a more creative communicator, savvy consumer of media, and compassionate citizen.

What is the value of your discipline to the larger context?

By emphasizing more human dimensions as we study the environment, we can more fully consider our policies and personal actions. At societal, local, and personal levels, the ways we interact with our environment are fundamental to health, happiness, and ethical living.



Rose Marie Brougham

Assistant Professor, Global Cultures and Languages
At UWL since 2013

What tip would you share on how you've been successful at UWL?

Building positive relationships with the people around you is critical. Take time to reach out to others, to hear and understand their perspectives; this investment will pay dividends.

How has your liberal studies education helped you achieve career goals?

A Liberal studies continue to enrich my life because I know how to satisfy my curiosities and continue to enjoy new experiences and meet new people.

How do you share the message of the versatility of receiving a liberal studies education?

I share this message mostly by participating in a variety of activities and initiatives about which I feel most strongly. More than anything I try to model versatility and flexibility.

For students I try to be transparent about the particular skills they are learning and how to apply them in other disciplines.

What is the value of your discipline to the larger context?

Much research informs us about how learning language helps us be successful in other disciplines and live longer and fuller lives, but, in my opinion, the most valuable aspect of this work is learning about how to communicate with others and understand another person's perspective.

"At societal, local and personal levels, the ways we interact with our environment are fundamental to health, happiness and ethical living," says Alysa Remsburg, lecturer in the Environmental Studies Program.



Eagle teaching excellence award winners

Two CLS faculty were among the six recognized for excellence in teaching at spring commencement. Both say their liberal studies education helped them succeed.

“ The most important tip I would share is always build community. At the end of the day, the relationships we form with our students and our colleagues are what matter most.”



Laurie Cooper Stoll

Associate Professor, Sociology and Criminal Justice
At UWL since January 2012

Teaches: Specialty areas of race, gender, intersectionality, education and social justice.

Background: Doctorate in sociology and graduate concentration in women's and gender studies, Loyola University. Taught sociology at universities in Chicago and Memphis since 2002. Previously, worked in healthcare and financial services, along with running a small business.

Favorite part of teaching:

Mentoring students. As a first-generation, non-traditional college student, I experienced firsthand the value and importance of strong faculty-student mentoring relationships.

How has your liberal studies education helped you achieve career goals?

The skills I learned through my liberal studies education allow me to identify, study, and address these inequalities via my teaching, research, and service to our campus and to the community.

What is the value of your discipline to the larger context?

When I hear people ask what can you do with a sociology degree, my response is what can you NOT do with a sociology degree? I believe it provides a solid foundation for any career a student may want to pursue. I love it when I have sociology majors who want to go into teaching, law enforcement, human resources, social work, etc. I want there to be folks in these fields — in all fields — who know how to think sociologically.

Christine Hippert

Professor, Anthropology
At UWL since Fall 2007

Teaches: General education courses: Search for Economic Justice and Contemporary Global Issues, capstone classes, and Anthropology of Food, Peoples and Cultures of Latin America, Medical Anthropology, and International Development and Culture Change.

Background: Graduated from Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1994, with a bachelor's degree in psychology, Spanish, and education. Before getting graduate degrees in anthropology and public health from the University of Pittsburgh in 2007, worked in different organizations and programs.

Favorite part of teaching: Whether I'm helping students make sense of other people's beliefs and practices in another country, or involving them in community engagement to help them learn more about diverse experiences right here in La Crosse, I enjoy seeing those light-bulbs turn on when they start to understand differences while simultaneously connecting to people's humanity.

How has your liberal studies education helped you achieve career goals?

I have an undergrad degree in psychology, Spanish, and education; a master's in public health; and a



“ My professional training has also helped me advise students to pay attention to what kinds of problems they want to help solve in the world, rather than what job they want after graduation.”

doctorate in cultural anthropology. All have helped me see contemporary global problems from multiple vantage points.

What is the value of your discipline to the larger context?

More and more companies and organizations are hiring anthropology students because they learn how to build trust with people and to help people understand that diversity is

a benefit to their organizations; because they value people's insight and see change as a process that requires input from multiple groups, those with AND without power; and because they know that context matters. Just because a problem was solved in one way with one group does not mean that the same solution will work with another group with a different history, different politics, different beliefs, etc.

TALK BACK

How to talk politics and keep friends

Tim Dale, associate professor of Political Science and Public Administration, speaking at the TEDxUWLaCrosse event.



To hear his full talk,
watch the video.

Dreading that family gathering with your uncle who always wants to talk politics? Tim Dale, UWL associate professor of political science and public administration, provides tips on how to talk politics and keep friends.

A key, says Dale, is actively listening instead of waiting for your chance to talk. As you listen, try to understand why someone is making the arguments they are. Use these phrases to more deeply understand

someone's reasoning and develop common ground.

I understand where you are coming from ...

I can see why you would believe that ...

I think we can agree on a basic premise that ...

Dale shared the tips as part of UWL's TEDxUWLaCrosse event in February.

Suthakaran Veerasamy, UWL assistant professor of psychology, was also one of the TEDxUW-La Crosse speakers. He shared insight into importance of 'critical feeling' to truly appreciate the experiences of another human being.



Listen to his talk

Visiting scholar shares racial identity development in the post-racism era


Janet Helms, a nationally-renowned scholar on the topic of race, visited UWL in February. She conducted workshops for administrators and faculty, and was the keynote speaker at UWL's Hate/Bias Response Symposium. She presented "Racial Identity Development in the Post-Racism Era." Her visit was funded by UWL's Visiting Scholar/Artist of Color Program.

Suthakaran Veerasamy, UWL assistant professor of psychology, invited Helms to campus. She was a faculty mentor to him while he was earning his doctoral degree in the late 1990s. She opened his eyes to a new area of study.

"Just because you are a racial minority doesn't mean you understand this stuff — I was clueless," he says. "She had a profound impact on my life because of her work in racial identity development. As a result of her, I started my own work in this field ... I look at religious identity, but my work is closely tied to her work."

Veerasamy, too, experienced firsthand the versatility of a liberal studies education.



 [Learn more about UWL's Visiting Scholar/Artist of Color Program.](#)

The following visiting scholars/artists of color visited UWL during 2017-18:

- Sylvester Gates, world-renowned theoretical physicist
- Amina Gautier, author of three award-winning short story collections
- Janet Helms, a nationally-renowned scholar on the topic of race
- Mariah Idrissi, model and international speaker
- Adrienne Keene, assistant professor at Brown University
- Hideaki Tsutsui, lighting designer
- Samuel Zyman, a Mexican-born composer and Juilliard School of Music faculty member

34%

of CLS seniors indicated that they had studied abroad in 2017.

National average is 14%

37%

of CLS seniors indicated working on an undergraduate research project with a faculty in 2017.

National average is 23%

64%

of CLS seniors indicated completing an internship in 2017.

National average is 49%

69%

of CLS seniors indicated completing a capstone/culminating experience in 2017.

National average is 45%

THE BOTTOM LINE

CLS students are participating at higher rates in high-impact practices (research, internships and more) than other UWL students. UWL is doing significantly better than national peers.

74% of all UWL seniors indicate 'often' or 'very often' working with other students on COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

Collaborative learning at UWL provides students with opportunities to solve problems with others. These projects take many forms, including, but not limited to: study groups within a course, team based assignments and writing, and cooperative projects and research.

— **11% above the national average**

75% of all UWL seniors have been exposed to SERVICE/COMMUNITY LEARNING

Experiential learning — as a required part of a course — gives students direct experience with issues they're studying in the classroom, as well as opportunities to analyze and solve problems in their communities. This point is particularly important considering the UW System commitment to the Wisconsin Idea.

— **15% above the national average**

56% of all UWL students indicate participating in a CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE

These culminating experiences ask students who are nearing the end of their college years to generate a project that integrates and applies what they've learned.

— **11% above the national average**

STUDY ABROAD



Study Abroad: Emiko Wilks, English Rhetoric and Writing and Art dual major, traveled abroad to Ireland this past summer.

Undergrad Research: From left, Carly Boles and Emily Farebrother co-produced an actor-collaborative and gender-neutral production of Shakespeare's, 'Macbeth.' The production was funded through an undergraduate research grant.

UNDERGRAD RESEARCH



INTERNSHIPS



Internships: UWL senior Olivia Schauls is a cultural anthropology and archeology major. Here she worked at her summer internship at Old Oak Farm, near Bangor.



Capstone: Jordon Drohner, Sociology, presented his capstone research on the health of Latinx youth at a Language Resource Center open house.

NEW | VOICES

Sophomore faculty share their UWL experience



“We all have different ways of valuing national parks, and that’s why we need to make sure we’re inclusive on listening to multiple voices,” says Marot Higgins, whose dissertation was looking at the politics and history in Alaska’s national parks.

Margot Higgins

Associate Lecturer of Environmental Studies

Where are you from?

I grew up in New York City and have lived all over the map, including several years in the Rockies and in California where I did my undergraduate studies at UC-Berkley.

Tell us about your research.

My dissertation was looking at the politics and history in the Alaska national parks. I’ve also been able to apply that recently to indigenous studies, justice issues and the current debate at Bear’s Ears national monument in Utah, where the area of protected lands was greatly reduced. My role is to extend perspectives, but not to change views. We all have different ways of valuing national parks, and that’s why we need to make sure we’re inclusive on listening to multiple voices.

What has been your favorite part about being in La Crosse?

Definitely the bicycling. It’s been an interest of mine both recreationally and from a sustainability perspective. Recently, I taught a course about bicycling the Montana landscape while I was there. I want to do something similar one of these summers with biking the driftless region. There are so many phenomenal landscapes.



Raúl Getino-Diez

Assistant Professor of Spanish

Where are you from?

I come from Spain and spent a good part of my life there. I came to the U.S. in 2012 and also studied in France for a year and lived in China for a year.

Tell us about your research.

My dissertation is a mix of linguistics, language acquisitions and cognitive psychology. Specifically, I focus on people learning a second language with grammatical genders, like Spanish, French and German, whose first language doesn't have that concept,

like English and Mandarin. I try to understand if mental representations of objects change because they have to learn if it's associated as masculine, feminine or neutral.

I'm also very interested in research on teaching styles for second languages, such as with music. My sister just finished her dissertation in music education, so we have a great opportunity to collaborate.

What has been your favorite part about being in La Crosse?

There's so much to love. I love the size of the city and the nature. It's so easy to walk or bike to many places and even better to exercise along the river and just take in all of the beauty.

I would also say the people here are amazing too. I keep meeting so many amazing people and it's been easy to make friends. It's great.

Has anything surprised you during the first-year teaching at UWL?

Just how great the students are. They always want to learn. When they come to class, I feel they're interested. It really fuels my love of teaching. It's that reason I chose to teach at a comprehensive university – so I can have that communication with students, but also be able to do my research. I hope I'm able to bring students in to do research with me to spark and share curiosity, so they want to learn more.

Evan Brody

Assistant Professor of
Communication Studies

Where are you from?

I grew up in Northern California, in Berkeley. I did my undergraduate studies at Northwestern, my graduate studies at NYU and my doctoral work at USC.

Tell us about your research.

I work in media studies, focusing on a critical cultural view on the

representation of the LGBTQ community and how they engage, primarily in sports and TV. I was lucky and received a grant from the Brooks Sports Science Institute at Clemson to look at the experience of LGBT varsity athletes who are out. It's not so much about the fear of public backlash, but about the individual experience and imagining how people who are different can fit in a successful way.


What's been your favorite part about being in La Crosse?

The beauty of the area. Before coming here, my experience with the Midwest was Chicago, a big city. But the topography here is incredible. I love seeing the sunsets through the bluffs. I also love living

near downtown and being within walking distance to food, bars and music — La Crosse really provides the luxuries of a small town, but you can feel the energy is up and coming.

Has anything surprised you in your first-year teaching at UWL?

I don't know if I'd go as far as surprised, but I'm impressed with the students' real commitment to school and education. Especially since my classes deal with gender, race and other potentially polarizing topics, I enjoy that the students are open to dialogue and want to explore and learn more. Even when they disagree, they're willing to learn more and be able to use evidence and facts to support their opinions.



“...I'm impressed with the students' real commitment to school and education,” says Evan Brody, assistant professor of communication studies.

“What surprises me the most is the attention our students pay to the world around them,” says Greg Parmeter, an assistant professor of theatre arts.

Greg Parmeter

Assistant Professor of Theatre Arts

Where are you from?

I’m from South Dakota, but La Crosse is home. I’ve been in this community for 12 years — longer than any other place — with much of that being during my time as the artistic director for the La Crosse Community Theatre. Before that, I did my undergraduate studies at Northern State University in South Dakota and my graduate studies at the University of Nebraska.

Tell us about your research.

As a performance emphasis, my master’s thesis was putting on a production and writing a thesis about it. What was great about it was we had to write a narrative to explain how we go from a script and through our process. It was devilishly difficult because the process for actors can be second nature when it comes to developing a character. By having to write it, we have to confront it and understand what we do. That’s made my teaching process easier, especially because acting is such an individual pursuit. I know how to help the students figure out what works and develop that process.



What’s been your favorite part about being in La Crosse?

This is one of the few places where I’ve been that I haven’t had to defend the legitimacy of theatre arts. We live in a community with two great theatre arts departments and a community theatre that is an institution. On top of that, we have multiple art galleries. The access to the arts is incredible. I always think it’s such a cool situation that’s made it an easy place to put down roots and make this my home.

Has anything surprised you in your first-year teaching at UWL?

The list of surprises would take your breath away. What surprises me the most is the attention our students pay to the world around them. It’s nothing like what I’ve read that the you are disengaged or entitled. The more time I spend with them, the more I see they’re smarter and hardworking — much more than when I was a student. Not only has that surprised me, but it inspires me and gives me hope that they will make the world a better place.



Barbizon bestowal

Anonymous donation inspires
art undergraduate research

Julie Mielke



A print created during the height of Barbizon art's beginnings. These prints inspired three UWL art students who will display their work in a UWL art gallery this academic year.





Rachel Alderton



Lydia Reilly

Julia Mielke had never left the U.S. before attending UWL. But a multi-thousand-dollar donation of art inspired the senior to get her first passport and head across the Atlantic Ocean.

Mielke, along with fellow printmaking students Rachel Alderton and Lydia Reilly, spent part of their summer in the Barbizon region of France, about 90 miles southeast of Paris. The region is famous for its printmaking that sparked the beginning of French impressionism.

There, the students researched the social aspects of the small community, as well as the

surrounding landscape that inspired so many artists in the late 1800's. Alderton describes their talent as insane. "You wouldn't believe that someone could create artwork this beautiful," she says. "It inspired me to want to make my work more detailed."

The students were able to travel to France thanks to help from an undergraduate research and creativity grant, something that sparked the students' interest when Art Professor Joel Elgin mentioned the possibility

"Getting that grant gave me such an amazing experience, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," notes Mielke.

"But I hope I get to do it again, it was so eye-opening."

The students will use what they learned in Barbizon to create their own prints, which they plan to showcase at an upcoming display in UWL's 3rd floor art gallery. They hope to feature their creations alongside some of the more than 60 donated pieces from that era and others nearby.

"They're so beautiful and incredibly detailed," says Mielke. "I want to be able to do that one day."

In Shelby Schroeder's first UWL communication studies class, she found delight in something most college students dread — public speaking.

When she finished her first speech, her professor confirmed, "You rocked it." It was the first indication that communications might be in her future.

Internships shape UWL graduate

Alumna draws on college, internship experiences to creatively design conference experiences nationwide

Today Schroeder, '16, is not a communication specialist per se, but her job requires effective communication. It also requires leadership, teamwork, relationship building, critical thinking, creativity, and management of long-term projects — as well as many tiny details. Those are all skills she gained through a liberal studies education, which included honing her skills in internships.

As Meeting & Events Coordinator for National Co+op Grocers, Schroeder is the logistics lead for

planning professional development conferences for 200 food co-ops nationwide. From designing menus to managing budgets, Schroeder has many logistical boxes to check for dozens of upcoming events. But project management is just the baseline of her job description, she explains.

Schroeder, who minored in professional and technical writing, draws on her creativity and critical thinking to design events that bring people together to solve problems and learn. This involves assessing co-ops' professional development needs and then brainstorming ways to cover those topics in entertaining and engaging ways.

"In a world where you could just go watch a TED talk, I want to show the value of bringing people together," she says. "I want them to walk away feeling energized and like they've learned something new."

Sometimes Schroeder takes the entertainment value of the conference into her own hands. At a recent human resources conference, she drew on her love of public speaking to emcee the event, ultimately receiving some rave reviews in conference evaluations.

"I knew I could bring the energy and the hype," she says. "If I'm good at something, I'm going to bring that value to my organization, even if it's not listed in my job description."

Schroeder's diverse skillset comes from diverse experiences at UWL. She had six internships, including several in event planning. The

experiences gave her more clues about her interest and broadened her professional network. After graduation, she had two job offers. When she landed her position with the National Co+op Grocers, she found out several people had mentioned her name in the hiring process.

In addition to interning, Schroeder recalls managing complex projects on a team as a UWL student in writing classes, as well as conducting undergraduate research, which required similar long-term project management skills.

She also volunteered outside of classes, including being the emcee of a UWL TEDx event. Her participation further confirmed how events can have the power to change people, she says.

Schroeder has returned to campus twice to talk to students about her career advice and path. Her main message is to not wait around during college for something to happen.

"College is your time to play and explore," she says. "You should spend that four years figuring out who you are, what you want to do and get out there and start doing it."

Published undergraduate research

Shelby Schroeder's senior UWL communications capstone research project Exploring Employee Engagement through Communication related to employee engagement was recently published.

UWL Alumna Shelby Schroeder emceeding at a human resources conference for the National Co+op Grocers. Schroeder draws on her communication skills, as well as many other leadership, creative and critical thinking skills to design conferences for employees of food co-ops nationwide.





Cuba and contradictions

Students explore life in a socialist society



Hear what the students
traveling to Cuba had to say.

UWL student Demi Weisbrod talking to a girl at school in
Las Terrazas, an organic community village the group visited.

Despite having strong social systems in place for its people, Cuba has a difficult economic and political history — including the U.S. economic embargo since 1960.



U WL student Demi Weisbrod grew up hearing complicated stories about Cuba and its government. When her parents learned she was traveling to the communist-led country over spring break, they were initially trepidatious.

But the story of Cuba, however, is one of wonder and beauty. On the island, Weisbrod met “the most beautiful people I’ve met in a long time.” She also learned about the country’s education and healthcare systems, both different from the U.S., but yielding some impressive results.

Cubans on average live to the age of about 79 — the same age as in the U.S., according to the World Health Organization. And the infant mortality rate matches some of the world’s richest countries, with six deaths for every 1,000 births, according to data from the World Bank.

Despite having strong social systems in place for its people, Cuba has a difficult economic and political history — including the U.S. economic embargo since 1960. While Cuba is more commercialized today and part of the global economy, the country

is frequently referred to as “frozen in time.” Technological advances have been slow coming — even internet access is very limited.

For all of these contradictions and its historical relationship with the U.S., Cuba provides a fascinating context for study, says Omar Granados, associate professor of Global Cultures and Languages. That was the impetus for the first UWL student trip to Cuba over spring break, March 9-19, 2018.

Ten students — primarily Spanish majors and minors and half studying public health — learned about the country’s historic relationship with the U.S., its education and healthcare systems. UWL’s Office of International Education and Engagement helped organize the trip.

Weisbrod, a senior public health and Spanish major, received an undergraduate research grant to study the The LGBTQ+ experience in Cuba. Her visit was part of a semester-long research project that used an interdisciplinary lens — Spanish, Latin American studies, Public Health and Community Health education — to examine the social and political

climate surrounding the LGBTQ+ community in contemporary Cuba. She also wanted to understand Cuba’s low HIV and STD rates and prevention efforts, after finding a lack of information.

Megan Strom, assistant professor of Global Cultures and Languages, sees the trip as a tremendous opportunity to serve students in health professions. Many students in these majors find it hard to fit study abroad into their schedules.

But Cuba can offer an amazing opportunity to compare and contrast healthcare systems and a shorter trip makes it more accessible to more students, she says. It also helps prepare them for a future working with diverse populations.

The goal is to expand the trip into a winter intersession experience for community health majors in the future and potentially create a continuing education experience as well.

The spring break provided a high-impact learning opportunity and first-hand lesson of how a liberal studies education provides the ability to adapt to different experiences.



May grad earns top honor

Kristin Reque, who graduated in May with a Bachelor of Arts in sociology with minors in criminal justice and ethnic and racial studies, received this year's John E. Magerus Award for the Outstanding Graduating Senior from the College of Liberal Studies.

Reque made the Dean's List every semester and conducted research on a variety of projects. She served as the head writer for the Great Rivers United Way's COMPASS 2018 community needs assessment.

Reque volunteered with La Crosse's Hunger Task Force and Warming Shelter, as well as Brown County Child Protective

Services. She was a member of the Sociology Club and Active Minds, which promotes mental health awareness.

Reque plans to attend graduate school at the University of Maryland to pursue a doctorate in criminology and criminal justice.

My favorite professor was:

Nicholas Bakken. He saw my potential for research and teaching long before I ever did. As a first-generation college student, I had no idea what research and teaching meant in a university setting. He has guided me through two internships, my sociology honors project, four research and teaching assistantships, graduate school applications, and final decisions post-UWL. He opened doors for me that I didn't even know existed and I'm confident I would have never done most of the work I am so proud of without him. He's invested countless hours and time into my growth and development as a student, a researcher, and as a person. I am a testament of his passion for teaching and dedication to embracing student work. It truly doesn't get better than him.

About the award:

The John E. Magerus Award for the Outstanding Graduating Senior from the College of Liberal Studies recognizes an outstanding graduate for academic accomplishments, leadership, and campus and community involvement. The award is named for Magerus, who retired in 2004 after 28 years of teaching and serving as an administrator in the college. Recipients receive \$1,000.



CLS alum who helped ACT grow to No. 1 in college advising, admissions earns honor

Jon L. Erickson, 76, says his biggest takeaway from college was the desire — or expectation — to make a positive contribution to society. The long-time college and workforce readiness leader definitely has.

Erickson retired as president of Education and Career Solutions of ACT after a 31-year career with the company best known for college admission tests. In fact, under his leadership, ACT grew into the No. 1 college admission and advising assessment company in the U.S.

Erickson has been a champion for improving the quality of education throughout the country and world, says Jon Whitmore, a retired CEO of ACT and former university president. "Jon had the long-range vision to see that his hunger for

educational success for all could reach a much larger audience through his work at ACT,” says Whitmore.

Those who know Erickson say he never lost his vision to keep students engaged and on track for academic and career success. “At his retirement party, a colleague summed up Jon’s core leadership style by saying he led with both his head and his heart,” notes Whitmore.

His lifetime commitment to education exemplifies that.

The Jon L. Erickson file

- Internationally recognized expert on college and workforce readiness assessment.
- Passion for education and student development.
- Employed by ACT Inc., the top college admission and advising assessment company in the U.S., from 1984-2015, retiring as president of education and career solutions.
- Master’s in educational psychology from UW-Milwaukee, 1981; bachelor’s in history and social studies from UWL, 1976, magna cum laude.

The Maurice O. Graff Distinguished Alumnus Award recognizes outstanding achievement of alumni who have brought honor and distinction to the university. Long-time administrator Maurice O. Graff instituted the honor in 1977.



Immersing the students from China into campus life stretched across three strategic plan initiatives — increasing community engagement, achieving excellence through equity and diversity, and advancing transformational education.

IT TAKES A VILLAGE

to share American culture


Students from a middle school in Luoyang, China, immersed in UWL during a visit last spring. Printmaking, wall climbing, engineering a sailboat, and understanding insects’ influence on culture were among the many stops during the visit in February. UWL faculty, staff and students volunteered to lead activities, teach and spend time with the group.

One of the Chinese students’ favorite parts of the trip was staying with U.S. host families, made up of UWL faculty and staff. They shared card games, ping pong matches, movies, ice skating and sledding. During the trip, the Chinese students saw daily life in America. They were most surprised by friendly clerks at the grocery store, less traffic on city streets, sweet breakfast food

and the lack of shoes inside American houses.

Christine Hippert, professor in Archaeology and Anthropology, and her family hosted a student because they know what it is like to be strangers in a foreign country. In 2014-15, Hippert and her sons lived in the Dominican Republic while she was on sabbatical.

Hippert says her family benefited immensely. “It showed us, again, that our way of doing things here is just one way of living,” she says. “We made a wonderful friend and my kids learned more about rich cultural traditions, beliefs, and practices from the perspective of a child who was close to their age, which has more impact than learning from an adult.”

A photograph of a flooded forest. The ground is submerged in murky water, and numerous trees stand in the water. A clothesline is strung between trees, with a white towel and a brown cloth hanging from it. The scene is dimly lit, with light filtering through the dense canopy of green leaves.

The face of homelessness

When La Crosse's former Tent City came down, several people at the homeless encampment captured its history. Two were Associate Professor of Art Linda Levinson and Professor of English Matt Cashion.

Through photos and interviews, the two and others from La Crosse's Homelessness and Art Committee documented the people and place in its final days on the Mississippi River bank. La Crosse's Collaborative to End Homelessness, along with the City of La Crosse and other agencies worked to dismantle Tent City to end homelessness in summer 2017.

"Photography is an art of vestiges; it is sensitive to departures and to the ghosts of the waning present and of the presence of absence," wrote Levinson in her artist statement. "I gathered up the images that the bulldozers could not efface."

The tent city exhibit ran at the La Crosse County Administrative Building from April-June.

Levinson and Cashion's project contributes to the community involvement charge of the university's strategic plan.