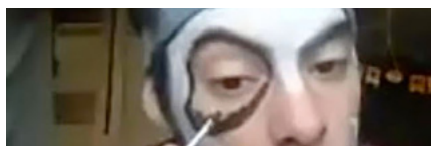
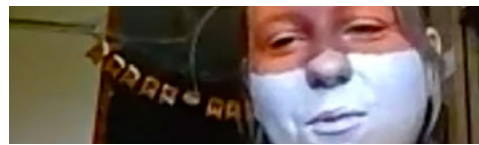


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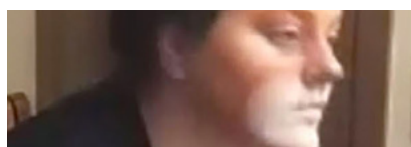
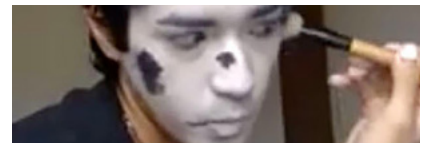
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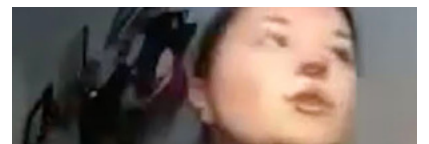
PANDEMIC



AND ZOOM

PERFORMANCES

THE SHOW



MUST GO ON!



IMPLEMENTING INNOVATIONS

The COVID-19 pandemic profoundly changed UWL activities, operations, and the daily lives of students, faculty, and staff. Online and hybrid courses, virtual meetings, and remote advising sessions became the norm along with personal challenges balancing work, health concerns, and caretaking of children and elders. In March 2020, our faculty and students abruptly switched to online teaching and learning. During Summer 2020, faculty diligently worked to incorporate technology into both online and hybrid courses then implemented these techniques during the recent Fall and Spring semesters. As we look to the future, CASSH anticipates taking what was learned by faculty, staff, and students to find new exciting ways to implement those innovations.

The Spring 2021 Capstone presents just a few examples of creative ways our faculty responded to very challenging teaching situations, often needing to take subject matter not well-suited for the online and finding ways to continue providing beneficial and valuable learning experiences for our students. These stories have

a focus on the Arts because of the unique challenges these disciplines face when transitioning to remote learning. I am certain you will agree this work is innovative and excellent.

From our faculty innovating learning experiences for students through the use of technology to the Mississippi Valley Archeological Center working as an essential service during COVID-19, all aspects of CASSH worked diligently during the pandemic to keep students and faculty learning and growing. I could not be prouder of these efforts across the College.

We are pleased to highlight ways our faculty rose to the occasion making sure students had the best learning opportunities. I believe you will agree this outstanding work clearly demonstrates our dedication to quality along with a focus on the success of our students despite the COVID disruption.

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "KARUNKEL".

Karl R. Kunkel, Dean
College of Arts, Social Sciences, and Humanities

INSPIRING | ACHIEVING | UNITING
 SPRING 2021, VOL. 10, ISSUE 2

THINK B4 U 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

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EDITOR

Brad Quarberg, '85

WRITERS

Kjerstin Lang

Kyle Farris

Brad Quarberg, '85

Nick Ragner, '14

EDITORIAL ADVISER

Marie Moeller

DESIGNER

Dave Piro

PHOTOGRAPHY

Michael Lieurance, '01

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Embracing the environment



A life well lived



A semester to remember



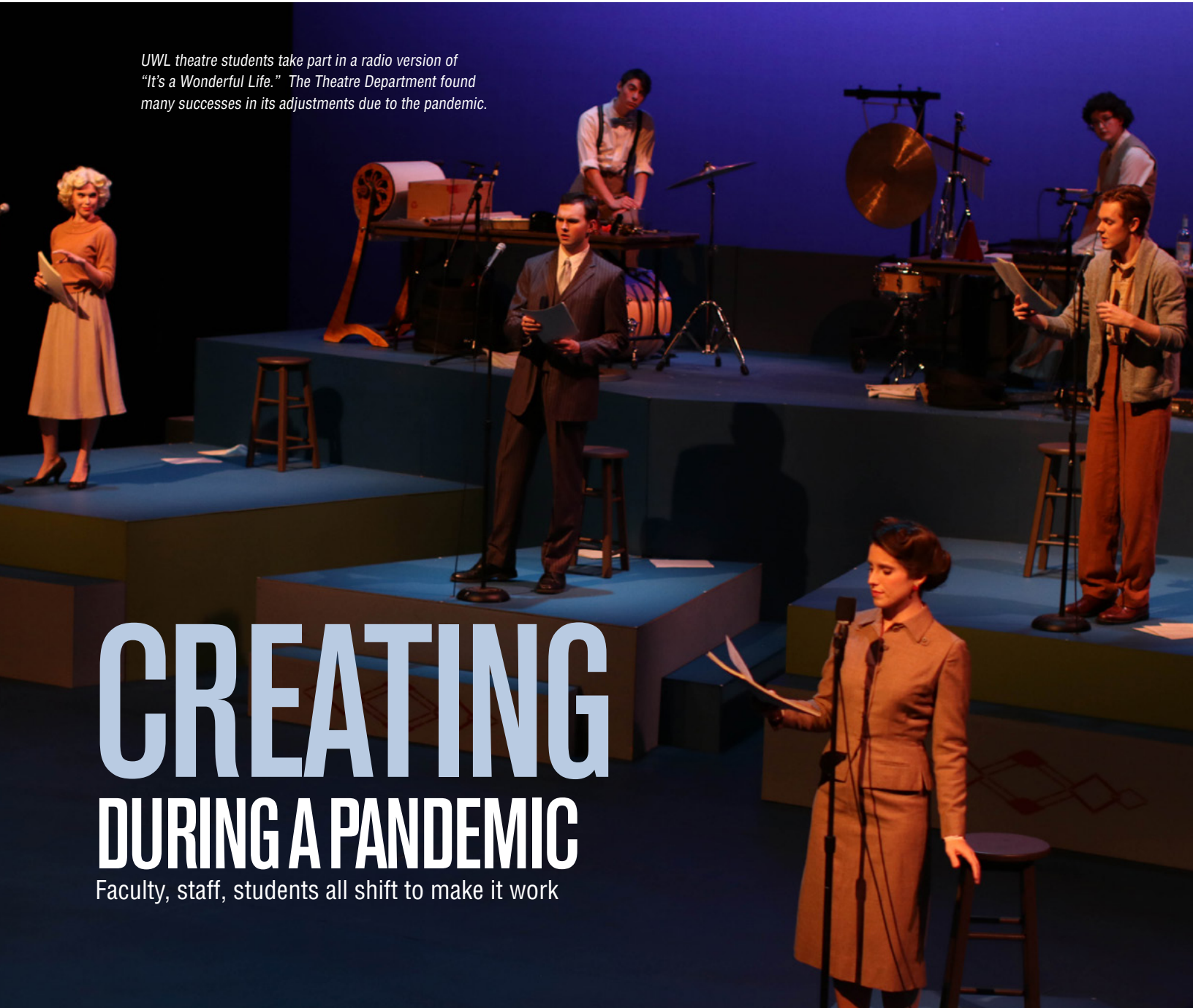
Historic election

CASSH DEPARTMENTS

Learn more about our departments and programs:

Archaeology/Anthropology	Music
Art	Philosophy
Communication Studies	Political Science/Public Administration
English	Psychology
Environmental Studies	Sociology
History	Student Affairs Administration
Ethnic & Racial Studies	Theatre Arts
Military Science	Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies
Global Cultures & Languages	

UWL theatre students take part in a radio version of "It's a Wonderful Life." The Theatre Department found many successes in its adjustments due to the pandemic.



CREATING DURING A PANDEMIC

Faculty, staff, students all shift to make it work

It hasn't been easy for faculty, staff and students — all forced to make a shift to adjust to teaching and learning during the pandemic. Zoom has become the most popular classroom. Performances are being

viewed in the comfort of the audience's homes.

Across CASSH, faculty and students adapted to this new reality — fast. Rehearsals were redesigned for flexibility and safety. And by using a blend of prerecorded performances and live,

virtual shows, students and faculty have managed to entertain while satisfying their own fix for public performance.

Here's a look at how some of the CASSH departments are finding success in the age of COVID.

SHOW TIME

Theatre Department takes the stage despite COVID's act

Performers have heard it often: no matter how hard it gets, "The show must go on."

And in the UWL Theatre Arts Department, it did.

"Most of the theatre classes this year have been taught using the hybrid model, which has required our faculty to be creative when teaching classes, particularly courses that focus on performance and movement, voice/singing, and technical design," says Professor Joe Anderson, department chair. "Some of our stage management, arts administration and theatre history courses have been able to proceed in person."

Anderson admits the pandemic has been devastating to the arts, largely due to a lack of live audiences. He and other faculty had to adapt to this new reality — fast.

"A couple of the things we came up with to provide our students additional opportunities is a play reading series where students propose a script they feel strongly about and then we produce a live Zoom 'reading' of the play," he explains.

Anderson says despite COVID, they've established a speaker series, "Theatre Arts in Conversation." Five invited theatre artists from around the country discuss their work and the state of the arts via a Zoom town-hall open to the university and La Crosse community.

Rehearsals were also redesigned for flexibility and safety. The first production this spring was fully rehearsed and performed via Zoom — a completely new style and technique for faculty and students.

"This style requires that we be extremely conscious of what the audience will see on their screen, whether costume changes are doable, or necessary and what kind of props the students would have at their disposal since they are performing from home," Anderson notes.

Two other spring productions rehearsed masked and in person, but with smaller casts to stay safe.



Joe Anderson

"Our top priority in the classroom and during rehearsal has been to keep students engaged, as well as safe," Anderson says.

He predicts theatre will never be the same as it was pre-COVID. While faculty and students are extremely anxious to get back to live shows, it may be a while before there are full houses due to distancing requirements. And, masks will likely be required initially.

Despite that, Anderson says the acquired skills of streaming, recording and captioning will prove useful. These changes further demonstrated the flexibility and adaptability of theatre artists.

"We're constantly telling our students that the skills of collaboration, thinking on your feet, coming up with creative solutions and working under pressure are all skills they acquire with theatre training," he says. "Little did we know we'd be doing this in spades this past year, but it's been really good to know we can rely on those very skills to get us through this horribly challenging time."



Join in the Speaker Series conversations:



See some student work:

Recruitment impacted, too

Performing Arts have taken a hit on stage — and in student recruitment.

"It's challenging to recruit students into a program and discipline based on performing where performing live for audiences is not possible," notes Anderson.

UWL's traditional six academic year shows were cut to two streamed performances in fall, with three streamed performances in the spring including a Zoom production, a created children's show with

Cover story continued on next page



The UWL Theatre Arts Department staged a radio version of "It's a Wonderful Life" in December. It was the department's second streamed performance for the fall semester without a live audience. Three streamed performances were held during spring: a Zoom production, a created children's show and a musical.



Zoom productions and classes have become commonplace during COVID-19.

access being given free of charge to elementary schools in the region, and a musical. Performances are a major component for building skills needed post-commencement.

Anderson says the department has done an amazing job doing more than others nationwide, but it's still not the same as performing for a live audience.

"The only solace, and it is not a very comforting one, is that the entire world of theatre is in the same situation in regard to live performances," he says.

BEST IN STATE

A national theatre blog puts the Theater Arts Department center stage in Wisconsin — and the country. OnStage Blog says UWL has the best theatre program in Wisconsin in listing the top programs in all 50 states. OnStage editors say identifying top college programs begins with finding those doing "amazing things and giving their students fantastic preparation for their various industries."

Art Professor Jennifer Williams paints a portrait of Tami Plourde, '98, co-owner and director of sales and marketing at Pearl Street Brewery. Williams visited La Crosse business owners to put them on canvas to provide an insight into what they went through during the early days of the pandemic. Her project is called, "Painting us Forward."

PANDEMIC PAINTINGS

Professor captures images of despair, hope

Jennifer Williams thought of the idea when the pandemic settled in — painting faces amid the quandary. The UWL art professor called it "Painting us Forward," with the images providing insight into what people are going through.

When COVID-19 shutdowns began, Williams contemplated the impacts — economically, socially, psychologically, educationally and more. As an educator, she hastily prepared to teach online.

But as a community member, she realized the impact on a local and broader scope. She responded by joining others in supporting small businesses.

"As an artist, I recognized that performing artists were particularly impacted due to the closure of music and theatre venues," she explains. "And certainly visual artists were similarly affected, with galleries either closing or eventually shifting to online exhibitions."

Williams, like other visual artists, often seeks solitude to work. That



was the quarantine's silver lining, though with mixed feelings.

Like others, she missed interacting face-to-face. That's how "Painting Us Forward" was born.

"I connected first with close family and friends, painting studies both from life and from photographs," Williams says. "I then designed a long-term project that would allow me to engage with the broader community, connecting with small businesses in a meaningful way."

Her subjects are painted on 11" x 14" canvases quickly using

oils, usually in one or two sessions, mainly from photographs. Adhering to physical distancing, Williams paints in person, too.

She adjusted fall classes, which included responses to the pandemic.

"The art world's expressions about this extraordinary, are numerous, well-executed responses," Williams notes.

In fall, her classes headed to rural La Crosse County where her students painted outdoors "en plein air," French for "in the open air," amid radiant autumn colors.

Cover story continued on next page

HOOKED ON HISTORY

MVAC a valuable community resource, even during COVID-19

UWL is home to one of the most versatile archaeology centers nationwide.

The Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center (MVAC) is much more than a collection of ancient artifacts. From K-12 education to community outreach and consultations with area businesses, MVAC share the region's rich history in a multitude of ways.

"Capstone" recently caught up with MVAC Director Tim McAndrews, and the rest of his team, to learn what makes MVAC such so special.



MVAC Director Tim McAndrews

Q: What is MVAC's mission and what role does it play in the community?

A: MVAC, founded in 1982, is an unusual organization with a broad mission that spans research, education along with outreach and preservation. As a research arm of the Department of Archaeology & Anthropology, MVAC works with the archaeology program to conduct high-quality regional research and provide real-world experience for undergraduates and recent graduates. MVAC also provides education and outreach services to K-12 teachers and students, and the general public. In addition, MVAC is self-supporting and offers archaeology-related consulting services for agencies, business and the public, helping them meet cultural resources obligations under federal and state laws. Finally, MVAC works to preserve archaeological resources and information, and serves as a regional repository for archaeological artifacts and documentation curated for the State of Wisconsin.

Q: MVAC was categorized as an essential operation during COVID-19. Why?

A: Much of MVAC's contract work is done on behalf of agencies and companies that provide essential public services. We work with clients on infrastructure projects such as highway construction and transmission line upgrades, and

other construction and development projects. Our services are essential for our clients in getting their environmental documents approved and keeping their projects on track. We also provide monitoring for projects that involve ground disturbance in sensitive locations where human burials might be present.

Q: Why is it important to study local history and past cultures?

A: In any area, studying local history and past cultures is key to understanding how that place and its people became what they are today. People have lived in the Coulee Region for thousands of years, changing and adapting the whole time. Studying history helps us understand what the region was like before Europeans arrived, how the area changed through time and how the cultures living here adapted. Descendants of the area's past cultures are still part of our communities today, making it even more important to encourage understanding of how we came to be where we are today.

Q: Are there any elements of local history that most people overlook?

A: Most people know that native peoples lived in the Coulee Region before Europeans arrived, but they might not know that occupation goes back more than 13,000 years



Researcher Katherine Stevenson handles a collection of samples at UWL's Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center. MVAC is one of the most versatile archaeology centers in the country, specializing in field work and research, school and community outreach, and business and agency consultations.

— basically, since the glaciers receded enough for people to live here. From about AD 1300 into the early 1600s, just before Europeans arrived, large, sprawling village sites we call “Oneota” were present all along the sandy terraces from Trempealeau south through La Crosse. Their inhabitants constructed agricultural fields, made use of wild food resources and engaged in trade down to the Gulf of Mexico and out onto the Plains. Evidence of those villages is still present in La Crosse and nearby communities, sometimes — literally — right under sidewalks and streets, and in people’s backyards.

Q: What’s your favorite part about working with MVAC?

A: We’re fortunate to work for an organization with such an unusual range of research, educational/

outreach, and preservation activities — especially activities that connect so directly with La Crosse and the surrounding region. Our work isn’t abstract; we’re not locked away in a dusty basement or the proverbial ivory tower. Instead, we’re out in our local communities, working with friends, neighbors, local governments and businesses, helping them learn about the past and incorporate preservation and respect for the past into planning for the future. This is an unusual model — possibly even a unique model — for an archaeology program at a public university. We feel privileged to be part of it.

Q: How can people support MVAC?

A: Financial support is always appreciated! Most of our funding is project specific and comes from contracts and grants. Private

donations, on the other hand, help support our broader outreach and educational activities. Combined with our endowment income, and support from the United Fund for the Arts and Humanities (UFAH), private donations are essential to keeping our outreach program running strong.

There are other ways to support and partner with MVAC. Following us online helps us broaden our outreach. And we welcome email or phone inquiries from people with general questions, preservation concerns, artifacts they would like to have identified, sites they would like to report, or other interests. Visit: www.uwlax.edu/mvac.

Cover story continued on next page

COVID CONCERTS

Music Department embraces virtual performances

A once-in-a-century pandemic hasn't stopped the Music Department from putting on a show.

Using a blend of prerecorded concerts and live, virtual shows, UWL students and faculty have managed to entertain while satisfying their own fix for public performance.

Assistant Professor Chris Hathaway organized a major **virtual concert** — three university choirs (Concert Choir, Treble Chorus and Choral Union) singing together for 75 minutes — during the fall semester.

"It's similar to a traditional in-person concert because it's still thoughtful, great choral music sung by compassionate and hard-working students," Hathaway explains. "It's different because we don't have an audience to connect with, we have to sing at least nine feet apart, we can only sing for 30 minutes without allowing the air to recirculate in the room, and we have to wear masks."

"Although it wasn't the same as an in-person concert experience, I thought the end product was something we can be very proud of."



Chris Hathaway

Hathaway designed the concert, as he does every concert, to reflect current events and issues. Last semester's themes included peace, justice, cultural understanding, self confidence, environmental issues, uncertainty, loss, hope and love.

"I usually try to integrate as much diversity as I can, in an effort to reflect thoughts, concerns or feelings happening in our world, and bring issues difficult to discuss to the forefront," he says. "Throughout the concert, the choirs sang in 12 languages, all trying to represent our similarities as human beings despite our differences, and the importance



Jonathan Borja

of embracing and understanding those differences rather than trying to shame or combat them."

At the onset of the pandemic, when most forms of live entertainment had screeched to a halt, Associate Professor Jonathan Borja found a creative way to reach audiences and lift spirits.

Borja, who specializes in flute, hosted his first **virtual concert** — a live solo performance — on the Music Department's Facebook page in early April.

"It was unusual because there is no immediate feedback from the audience," he says. "And because



I was using my phone to stream it, I wasn't even sure if the event was going through."

But the event went smoothly, attracting more than 400 viewers and plenty of virtual applause in the comments. It also served as the foundation for future performances.

Borja did another solo flute concert in April. Over the summer, he did one better — teaming up with a pianist friend for a 40-minute, two-person recital.

While the concerts went well, and provided much-needed entertainment during a difficult time, Borja noticed one recurring issue. No matter what he did, he struggled with sound quality on live performances. Without a captive audience, he was also acutely aware of how much dead air there is when shifting stands, tuning and making other adjustments.

The solution: scrapping the live format and recording the music in advance.

In the fall, Borja released two recorded piano recitals — one with Mary Ellen Hauptert from Viterbo University, and one with Mary Tollefson, chair of UWL's Music Department.

That came with its own challenges, and its own opportunities.

"In a performance, whatever happens, happens, but in a pre-recorded version, there is the opportunity of making it better," he says. "But without question, the biggest challenge is that you really don't get that immediate connection with the audience. And it's not just the applause, it's the entire atmosphere."

The "Every Heart is in You: A Virtual Concert for Unity" brought together singers from three UWL choirs: Concert Choir, Treble Chorus and Choral Union. The Music Department has embraced virtual concerts amid COVID-19.

Borja and Hathaway say virtual concerts, and virtual classes in general, have been a great learning experience for all. The past year has also served as a reminder of music's unique power to inspire hope.

"It gave us further examples as to how music can prevail even during a pandemic," Hathaway says. "It shows once again how resilient, flexible and amazing these students are. And it reminded me how important choral music is to these students and to the world, especially in a time of tragedy and uncertainty."

A group of approximately 20 students is gathered on a path covered in fallen leaves in a wooded area. The students are dressed in outdoor gear, including jackets, hats, and backpacks. They appear to be engaged in a field activity or discussion. The background shows bare trees and a clear blue sky, suggesting a late autumn or winter setting.

Embracing the environment

Environmental Studies minor attracts students of all majors

UWL's Environmental Studies Program uses field trips — like this 2017 trip to the La Crosse River Marsh — to highlight the fundamental connections between human and nature. The program has seen a roughly 50% increase in enrollment over the past five years.

Not many senior capstone courses include students from a dozen majors.

But this sort of variety is expected in UWL's Environmental Studies Program, a minor that highlights the fundamental connections between people and the natural world, and in doing so, appeals to a wide array of students and disciplines.

"We try to demonstrate that global and national environmental issues such as climate change, clean water, sustainable agriculture and others are all taking place in our backyard," explains Margot Higgins, an associate lecturer in the program. "Our courses share a common theme that there is no separation between humans and nature, and thus studying the relationship between the two can be applied to any academic field — from biology to sociology to art and literature."

Faculty say the 24-credit program is intriguing to students from all sorts of disciplines, in part because environmental issues are a growing global concern, affecting industries of all kinds.

Many students, notes Senior Lecturer Alysa Remsburg, have taken a genuine personal interest in the topics discussed in the program.

"Of the students that I've had in the capstone course this year,

I count a total of 13 different majors represented," she says. "Each of these students is passionate about including environmental lenses in their careers or their personal lives. Environmental studies becomes a strong part of their personal identity as college graduates, not simply an afterthought or a means of earning credits."

While issues like climate change or the availability of clean water are often placed in a global context, UWL faculty have found innovative, hands-on ways to localize them.

Each year, students partner with about 20 different organizations for their capstone service-learning experience. Recent examples include sustainability initiatives with the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, prairie mapping with Friends of the Blufflands, energy monitoring with the School District of La Crosse and environmental education with WisCorps.

Faculty also arrange class field trips, including visits to a wastewater treatment plant, a landfill, Kane Street Community Gardens, the U.S. Geological Survey in La Crosse, and the La Crosse River Marsh.

"We give students direct experience with issues they are studying in the curriculum and with ongoing efforts to analyze and solve problems in

the community," Higgins explains. "Students are challenged to both apply what they are learning in real-world settings and reflect on those experiences in a classroom setting."

Environmental studies shouldn't be confused with environmental science, which is a field that strictly uses scientific processes to understand the natural world. Environmental studies, on the other hand, is a broader field of study drawing upon the natural sciences, social sciences, the arts and the humanities.

Faculty say there's growing interest in this kind of program. The numbers bear that out.

Associate Professor Sam Cocks, chair of the program, notes that there has been a roughly 50% increase in enrollment over the past five years.

"People will care more about the environment if they feel connected, and people will feel more connected if they have a sense of place," Cocks says. "Our courses are taught in a way that helps students make connections between each other, between ideas, and between themselves and the community."



A LIFE WELL LIVED

Jo Arney remembered for vibrant spirit, impactful career

Jo Arney, UWL's director of Student Success, died Nov. 19, 2020. Friends and colleagues remember the 44-year-old for not just the quality of her work, but the boundless vitality with which she lived.

UWL has lost a kind soul, an infectious laugh and a fervent friend to students and colleagues alike.

Jo Arney, director of Student Success, died Nov. 19, 2020 of a serious medical condition. The 44-year-old is remembered for not just the quality of her work, but the boundless vitality with which she lived.

“Jo was everyone’s fun-loving, quirky friend on campus,” says Karolyn Bald, interim director of International Education & Engagement, and a longtime friend of Arney and her husband, Jeremy. “I would imagine that most people (who knew her) thought of her as a good friend, and that was the beauty of Jo. She genuinely loved people and made you feel heard and cared for, even if she only met you once or twice.”

Arney was many things to many people — a friendly face, a trusted confidant, a practical joker and a reassuring voice during difficult times.

Whether you’d spent 10 weeks or 10 years at UWL, you probably had a Jo Arney story.

“Even as a colleague, she would be a personal cheerleader if you needed it,” notes Lisa Weston, assistant director of Residence Life. “One particularly hard week last year, I attended a weekly meeting

with Jo and other campus partners. I was clearly frustrated and feeling like the work in front of me was too difficult. Jo took off the bracelet she was wearing and gave it to me, and she said something like, ‘Wear this until you don’t need it anymore.’ It was inscribed with the phrase ‘Keep going.’ I only wore it for that meeting, but that feeling stuck with me and still does. That’s exactly who Jo was — she inspired you to keep going.”

To Sarah Joslyn, coordinator of New Student & Family Programs, Arney was the quintessential people person — someone who knew the tremendous value of friendships.

“One of my favorite memories about Jo was when she invited myself and Karolyn Bald to lunch with her,” Joslyn says. “Jo said to us, ‘You are two of my favorite people, and I need you to know each other better.’ We had a wonderful lunch swapping stories, laughing and enjoying each other’s company. To me, this memory is just so very ‘Jo,’ because she was always bringing people together. She loved so many people and was always trying to help make connections.”

Arney left an indelible mark during her 13-year career at UWL, which began as a professor in the Political Science and Public Administration Department.

Tim Dale, a professor in the department, said she approached her

job with humor and professionalism, “and made everyone better at theirs.”

Arney’s love for the people around her was perhaps most evident in her work with students.

A first-generation and transfer student, she knew firsthand the obstacles many face navigating college. She was willing to do whatever it took to help them meet those challenges.

It was not uncommon for Arney to call one of her colleagues, in tears, to share how proud she was with a particular student.

Those who knew Arney say there is no better measure of her legacy than the number of lives, especially young lives, she changed for the better.

“To all her students and alums ... her heart was bursting with pride for all of you,” Bald says. “She was so incredibly proud of your development, your achievements and your impact.”

Memorial scholarship

A new scholarship will honor Arney’s remarkable life and career. The Jo Arney Student Success Scholarship will be awarded to a new student with a first-generation and/or multicultural background. **Click here to make a donation.**



Steve Schemenauer, '96, says UWL provided a great educational foundation for both his military and civilian careers.

1-STAR GENERAL

'96 alum earns prestigious Brigadier General rank

He's one of only 150 in the country. And he attributes the foundation for that achievement to UWL.

Steve Schemenauer, '96, received the distinguished title of Brigadier General last summer. The part-time military man holds two positions in the Army National Guard. He's the Assistant Division Commander – Sustainment for the 34th Infantry Division (Red Bulls) of the Minnesota Army National Guard in Arden Hills, as well as the Mobilization Assistant to the Director, J-2 for U. S. Cyber Command at Fort Meade, Maryland.

The Brigadier General title is rare. According to Statista, there were 339

general officers in the Army in the 2021 fiscal year — with only 157 brigadier generals.

“It means I've been in the Army for a long time and been lucky,” jests Schemenauer, who enlisted in the Army Reserve in June 1991 at UWL.

Schemenauer says he has been fortunate to have good assignments and great mentors throughout a nearly 30-year career. He says both helped him achieve the rank, the Army's fifth highest.

During his day job, Schemenauer is a partner at Stinson LLP, in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He chairs the law firm's Unmanned Aircraft Systems practice group and co-chairs

the construction practice group, and he litigates, mediates and arbitrates cases nationwide.

The Stanley, Wisconsin, native says UWL provided a great educational foundation for both his military and civilian careers.

“On the military side, I earned my commission through the UWL ROTC program and was a proud member of the Eagle Battalion,” Schemenauer explains. “ROTC prepared me to become an officer and lead soldiers. I learned about tactics, strategy and military history, and I developed lasting friendships with many of the cadre and cadets that remain strong to this day.”

The pre-law political science major with a criminal justice minor is also thankful to faculty and staff who helped him grow.

“On the civilian side, I learned the fundamentals of the law, which prepared me for law school and, ultimately, my career as a lawyer,” he notes.

Schemenauer says he is fortunate to serve at a tactical headquarters where he can continue to hone his military skills, while simultaneously serving strategically in the ever-changing cyber domain.

“It is truly the best of both worlds,” he says.

His military responsibilities are many. As Assistant Division Commander for Sustainment, Schemenauer is the Division Commander’s primary advisor for personnel readiness, combat support and combat service support operations for the division’s 23,000 soldiers across nine states. As Assistant Director of Intelligence for Mobilization, he’s a principal intelligence adviser to the U.S. CYBERCOM Commander, coordinating intelligence to support military cyberspace operations.

Along with his military and work duties, Schemenauer, who lives in

Woodbury, Minnesota, chairs the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans, and serves on the board for the Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce. Despite his busy schedule, he remains in contact with UWL faculty and classmates.

“That was one of the best things about UWL” he says. “It was small enough to build real relationships with people and develop a lasting and meaningful network of friends and colleagues throughout the world.”

 **WATCH SCHEMENAUER'S PROMOTION**



Steve Schemenauer, '96, received the distinguished title of brigadier general last summer. His wife and daughter pinned on his one-star shoulder boards.

Fruits of their labor

La Crosse's victory gardens reach end of successful first year



Cathy Van Maren tends to the volunteer-run victory garden at Aptiv Inc. — one of four in La Crosse. Van Maren, a longtime employee in UWL's Upward Bound program, says growing your own food allows people to save money, eat healthy and take back control of their lives.

Dozens of La Crosse area families felt the simple satisfaction of eating locally grown food, thanks to a series of victory gardens planted around the city last summer.

The gardens, a collaborative effort between city officials and local volunteers, yielded countless grocery

bags full of fresh fruits and vegetables distributed to the Hunger Task Force of La Crosse and the Salvation Army.

The project, intended to relieve food shortages caused by the pandemic, was supported by research from UWL environmental studies students Kelly Flynn and Joe Rampolla.

“Especially during a time where many people are no longer financially stable and food-secure, victory gardens can provide access to local, healthy food,” Flynn says. “It’s definitely rewarding to see a project I’m passionate about come to life.”

The city helped get the project off the ground before turning it over to community volunteers.

Cathy Van Maren, a former longtime employee in UWL's Upward Bound program, helped lead harvesting at the victory garden at Aptiv Inc.

With the help of Aptiv clients, Van Maren and other volunteers harvested lots of produce — everything from potatoes and kale to radishes and spinach.

Three other gardens at city hall, Hogan Administrative Center and Kane Street Community Garden had similar output.

“It wasn't that long ago that everyone grew their own food. Then we got into the mode of having to buy everything,” Van Maren explains. “I just feel like we need to take back control of that part of our lives, instead of buying food that was sprayed with chemicals and shipped in from 1,000 miles away.”

Many responsible for planting and harvesting were UWL retirees or alums.

Traci Otto, '20, a day services associate with Aptiv's adult program, was part of the team that helped Aptiv participants pick ripe vegetables each Friday. Spending time in the garden helps instill valuable life skills, she says.



The produce harvested at the Aptiv victory garden last summer —potatoes, kale, radishes and spinach — was distributed to the Hunger Task Force of La Crosse and the Salvation Army.

“That is a big part of Aptiv's mission — to help the participants learn and maintain life skills that they can use at home,” explains Otto, who majored in psychology. “I also just enjoy being able to see the joy that volunteering brings to the participants.”

Volunteers hope the gardens will be back this summer — only better.

They've made a list of the most and least popular fruits and vegetables, and will be adjusting planting accordingly.

They're also hoping to enlist more volunteers, so the gardens can look and grow their best.

If the gardens continue to prove popular, Van Maren says, there may be opportunities for expansion.

“I think we should have a garden in every neighborhood,” she says.



'UNAPOLOGETICALLY PRO-DEMOCRACY'

Department works to make democracy work

The 2020 elections, followed by the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol, left many questioning U.S. democracy.

Faculty in the Political Science & Public Administration Department say it's important to promote active citizenship and the need to participate in a democracy.



Tim Dale

"Informed citizens are better citizens, and we are a better democracy when people are educated about politics and deliberate about public policy in meaningful ways," says Professor Tim Dale. "We are fortunate in our area and in our state that we have some excellent reporters who ask very good questions, and go below the surface of political stories to give people really good information and insight."

Dale, who has taught at UWL since fall 2012, believes his job extends beyond UWL's walls. That's why you'll

often see or hear him on state and local newscasts.

Dale leads by example to promote the department's goal: for students to understand the importance of being involved in their community.

"Whether or not they go into a political career, and many of them do, I want all of my students to graduate with a commitment to community service," explains Dale.

He has seen students succeed in politics, but also in nonprofits, community outreach, and the private sector in public-serving roles.

Colleague Anthony Chergosky joined the department in August 2018 and has served as a political analyst for newspapers, radio and TV statewide. He moderated seven area political debates in 2020, along with leading discussion on politics to community organizations.

"My goal is to go beyond partisan and ideological talking points," he explains. "People get enough of that on cable news and social media."

Chergosky says he doesn't favor either political party and keeps his own political views private.

"I am unapologetically pro-democracy," he notes. "I ask myself: 'Am I conveying the facts to the best of my ability?' and 'How can I promote

the health and stability of American democracy with all that I do in the classroom and community?'"

Chergosky pushes students to consider different sides of political debates and why someone might have a different view than they do.

A civil affair

Series provides discussion in a civil, reasoned conversation

Politics can be very negative. In fact, many people avoid political discussions because they are afraid of how divided and angry people seem to be.

But Professor Tim Dale and Assistant Professor Anthony Chergosky, both Political Science & Public Administration, hold



Anthony Chergosky

controversial, political discussions in their classes all the time. And their students have those discussions in a civil, reasoned manner.

“Talking with my fellow political scientists, we noticed that our classrooms were productive spaces for having political dialogue, and we wanted to bring that model to a broader audience,” explains Dale. “If we can do it in our classes, we should be able to do it in our society.”

That’s how Dale and Chergosky came up with “Civility in a Partisan Era,” a series of politically-charged lectures featuring nationally recognized speakers such as Christine Todd Whitman, David Gergen and George Will.

“Many Americans view the opposing party as an enemy rather than simply as the opposition,” says Chergosky. “This is not sustainable.”

Incivility and political discourse nastiness have always been around, Chergosky says. But they have risen to unacceptably high levels.

“Social media and cable news are major contributors to these trends,” he notes.

Chergosky says American democracy is at a crossroads — but there is good news. When he gets discouraged by the no-holds-barred partisanship, he thinks about his classes.

“Students in my classes routinely have respectful discussions about politics and understand diverse points of view,” he says. “They think that politics should be about so much more than angry social media posts and cable news shouting matches.”

Prof spearheads La Crosse-area study

Associate Professor John Kovari has spearheaded a study that explores La Crosse area communities sharing fire and EMS services.

The UWL Political Science & Public Administration Department faculty member began pursuing the idea after participating in a news program with La Crosse Fire Chief Ken Gilman and former Onalaska Mayor Joe Chilsen discussing the idea.

Kovari turned to the Wisconsin Policy Forum, a leader in studying similar service sharing in southeastern Wisconsin. He got a \$5,000 grant from CASSH that set the stage to bring the Forum to La Crosse to interview stakeholders. The La Crosse Area Planning Committee eventually hired the non-profit group and organized local meetings.

Kovari says it’s important for UWL to get involved in a project like this.

“I’m a big believer in the Wisconsin Idea and UWL’s commitment to community outreach,” he explains. “And as a public administration scholar, working with local officials is an important part of my research agenda. It’s meaningful for me to be able to bring together the latest in academic research with the needs of local governments.”

Kovari says it’s key for students to be involved in community projects. Chris Paul, ’19, is listed as a co-author of the report. Paul attends Indiana University’s O’Neill School of Public Affairs, a top public affairs school.

Saving taxpayer dollars while improving government services is always key in public administration, says Kovari. The study found that was possible.

Area officials and agencies will continue to pursue the idea.



See the study:



Political Science & Public Administration Associate Professor John Kovari has spearheaded a study exploring La Crosse-area communities sharing fire and EMS services.



‘JUST DOING MY PART’

RAGNER IS REGIONAL RISING STAR

A decade ago, Nick Ragner was at a crossroads after receiving a rejection letter from UWL.

Now, he holds a key campus role and is among the community’s most promising young people.

River Valley Media Group and the 7 Rivers Alliance named Ragner one of their 2020 Rising Stars last fall — a title reserved for people under 40 who have made a significant positive difference in the region. (Other alums on the list: Ryan John Crain Sr., ’18; Jacob Erickson, ’07; Andrew Jagim, ’10; Amanda Jones, ’14; Josh Mansee, ’10; Garrick Olerud, ’11; Kate Peak,

’13; Jenna Theler, ’09; and Lynsee Thompson, ’15.)

“I hate getting recognition, but it’s very humbling and very appreciated,” says Ragner, ’14, UWL social media and communications specialist. “It’s surreal to me, and it’s hard to find words for it. Like so many other people, I’m just doing my part to make La Crosse a better place.”

Ragner’s gives a voice to the university’s social media accounts and produces videos and articles that highlight campus stories.

Previously, he was director of development for the Salvation Army

of La Crosse County and a producer, reporter and anchor for WKBT-TV.

But Ragner’s impact extends far beyond his day job. He spends free time volunteering as a member of the Rotary Club of La Crosse After Hours, as advisor of the Rotary Interact Club at his alma mater Logan High School, or as a Salvation Army advisory board member.

“It inspires you to go above and beyond and do extra things, because you’re surrounded by people who are doing that kind of work,” he explains.

Highlights from Ragner’s volunteering include restoring trails in Hixon Forest, ringing bells and serving meals for

Nick Ragner, '14, a social media and communications specialist at UWL, was named a Rising Star by River Valley Media Group and the 7 Rivers Alliance. The list recognizes people under 40 making a significant positive difference in the 7 Rivers Region.

Salvation Army, organizing a 25-year anniversary banquet for Rotary Lights and helping coordinate marketing efforts for iFeed, a high school-led hunger effort.

“Even the smallest task,” he notes, “can change someone’s day or change someone’s life, and that’s hugely impactful.”

Ragner’s rise can be traced to that UWL rejection letter. Still intent on furthering his education, he applied to and was accepted by Western Technical College, where he narrowed his career paths to broadcasting and teaching.

Two years later, Ragner got into UWL and continued to lay his foundation.

He was shaped by professor emerita Patricia Turner and other faculty, by his work with the student TV station WMCM-TV, and by learning about the campus and community.

Ragner has been serving the La Crosse area ever since — as a storyteller, a volunteer and a shining example for others to follow.

“La Crosse is my hometown, but I never realized what some people have to go through, how much of a need there is for basic necessities,” he says. “Then I saw all these awesome people doing great things, and it made me want to do great things, too.”

OUT ON A LIMB | Grad’s project examines what trees can teach us

Since she was young, Carly Rundle-Borchert has believed there is more to trees than meets the eye.

That hypothesis was the seed of her recent photographic research essay, “Communicating Green,” in which she examines how language and culture shape our understanding of tree science.

“Both trees and humans have their own interworking cultures: forests and cities,” says Rundle-Borchert, who graduated with a degree in English last spring. “After learning more about how healthy forests are literally rooted in a network of healthy communication (the giving and taking of information and nutrients), I wondered what human cultures could learn from these slower, larger and older societies.”

Creating the project, Rundle-Borchert was inspired by a trip she took to Olympic National Park in Washington state, where she explored the old-growth forests described in Peter Wohlleben’s book “The Hidden Life of Trees.”

Her photographs from that visit illustrate the sheer majesty of the place — colossal conifers with gnarled roots and moss-coated branches.

Hiking by day and sleeping in a camper van by night, she began to see her project crystallize.

She also drew insight from texts she had read about trees, including Wohlleben’s “Hidden Life of Trees,” Richard Powers’ “The Overstory,” Robin Wall Kimmerer’s “Braiding Sweetgrass” and Florence Williams’ “The Nature Fix.”

“The biggest challenge I faced was getting out my first draft. I’d flip through all my notes, quotes, photos and books and be so overwhelmed I couldn’t type a single word,” she explains. “My favorite parts of the creation process were the little moments when an idea from two or more different authors connected, clicking in my mind. That’s what continued to reinforce the purpose of my project and my passion and persistence throughout.”

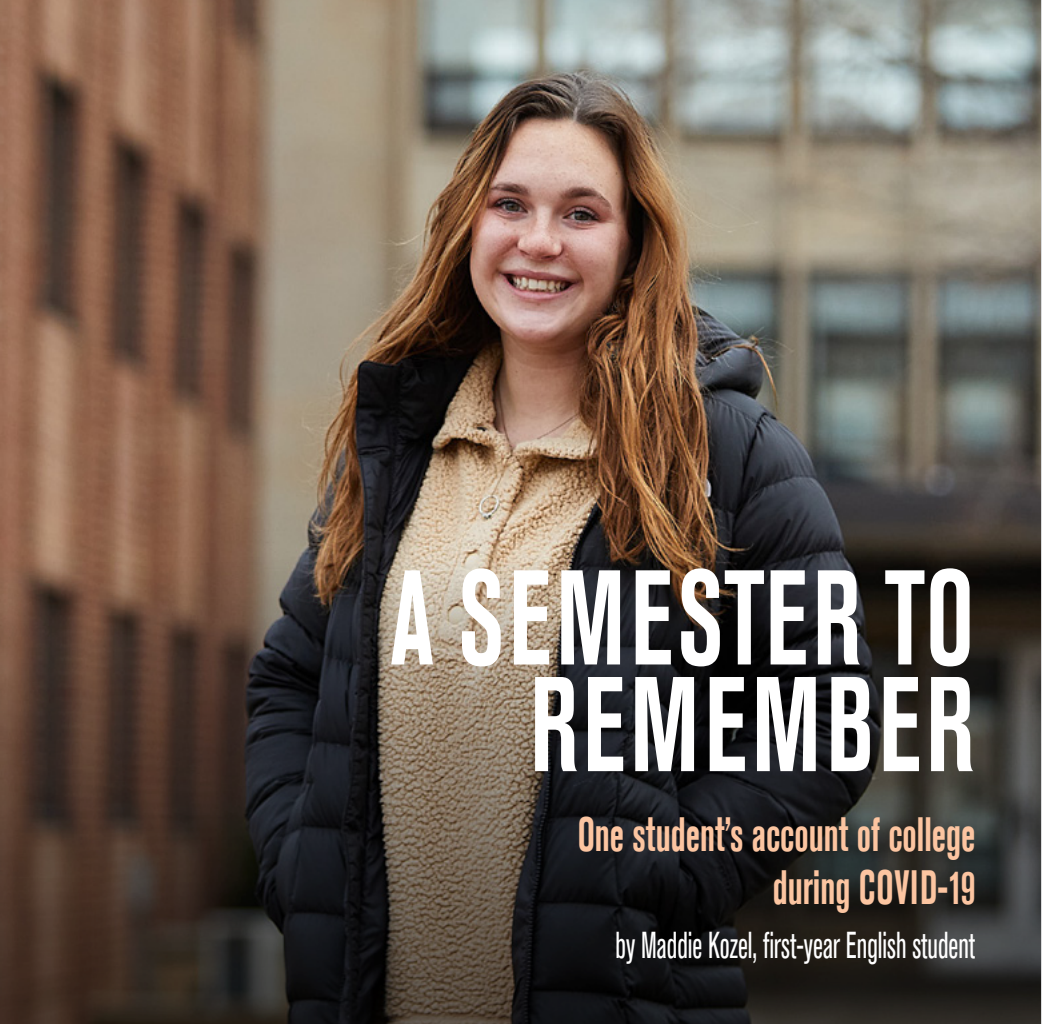
The result was a 24-page, self-published zine that has earned high praise from two of the authors cited in it.

Rundle-Borchert hopes to turn her skill for storytelling and her affection for nature into a career as a freelance environmental photojournalist. She lives in Bloomington, Minnesota, writing and taking photographs for the Sierra Club’s North Star Chapter.

[Read her full research essay here.](#)



In her photographic research essay, “Communicating Green,” Carly Rundle-Borchert, '20, examines how language and culture shape our understanding of tree science.



A SEMESTER TO REMEMBER

One student's account of college during COVID-19

by Maddie Kozel, first-year English student

Maddie Kozel says her first semester was filled with ups, downs and constant changes due to COVID-19. But the first-year English student says UWL "somehow still managed to become my home."

When I applied to UWL, I had no idea just how much COVID-19 was going to flip the college campus I would live on.

Even in August, I couldn't have imagined all the crazy things we ended up going through the fall semester.

We've gone through a two-week shelter in place (three weeks if you live in Coate Hall), participated in online classes, and we got to eat in Whitney Center for the first time in December! Overall, the start to this school year has been nothing like the typical freshman college experience. But I still fell in love with the people and places here in La Crosse.

Despite COVID, move-in day was still, well, move-in day. My roommate (who happens to be my best friend) and I left home at 5 a.m. to drive up with our sisters and our plants in the car. Our

parents took two separate cars filled with clothes, shoes and furniture.

We arrived at Coate Hall, put on our masks, and got to work carrying everything up four flights of stairs. (I never thought it'd get so easy to walk up and down this many stairs every day.)

That first day, we saw all the faces we'd be living with for the year. We walked around the halls (masked) to talk to others on our floor. At first, we made close friends with some of the girls we'd been texting all summer. We all went outside to enjoy the late summer nights and talked for hours.

By the second week, many of us tested positive for COVID. We all had a rapid test on Friday morning, and then a PCR test to double-check a few days later. Luckily, I (and almost everybody I know who tested positive then) was asymptomatic.

Coate had a two-week shelter in place, starting on a Thursday night. My entire cube was standing in the hallway sharing the news and calling our parents.

Most of us stayed on campus. We made friends through the windows and walking to the tent to get food.

When everybody was allowed to return to campus, life returned to our new normal. We got to see everybody outside in the yard, playing Spikeball and volleyball and reading or doing homework. This is where most of our social interactions came from. We bonded with people we'll be seeing for the next four years.

Luckily, some of my best new friends ended up being those in my hall. So, when the weather got too cold to see people outside, I could still spend time indoors with my friends.

It also helped when the academic buildings opened — we could study in socially distanced classrooms or study spaces. The food in Whitney got even better, Mondo's opened up again, and I got to see my friends for a few months before winter break.

The semester was absolutely unpredictable, but UWL still managed to become my home. I am so unbelievably happy with the people I have met and the experiences I have had — even on a socially distanced and (sometimes) sheltering-in-place campus.

JUST PUBLISHED



Christine Hippert

Professor of anthropology,
Archaeology/Anthropology
Department

At UWL since 2007

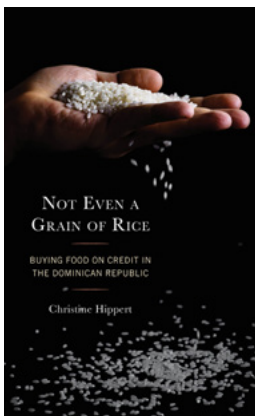
Hometown: Worcester,
Massachusetts

• Why did you write the book?

I carry out long-term research in Latin America and the Caribbean about the effects culture has on people's survival strategies as they relate to food security and debt. In my book, I discuss the emerging relationships between food shopping, in-store credit to buy food, and anti-Haitian racism in an international tourist destination in the Dominican Republic. The book tells stories of people living in a working-class urban neighborhood who work hard, long hours, earning very little money to serve vacationers from around the world.

• What in your research surprised you the most?

Being an anthropologist is all about getting to know more about others as they get to know you. This cross-cultural give-and-take is important to gain trust. For this book, I worked with migrants from Haiti who seldom had legal papers to live and work in the Dominican Republic. So, gaining their trust was essential. They were particularly intrigued by my sons who accompanied me while I lived in the Dominican Republic.



• Who is the book's main audience?

Undergraduate students. Also for those who know little about the cultures, politics, history, and economics of the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

• Was this your first book?

Yes.



Ken Shonk

Associate professor of world
history and social studies
education, History Department

At UWL since 2013

Hometown: Glendora,
California

• Why did you write the book?

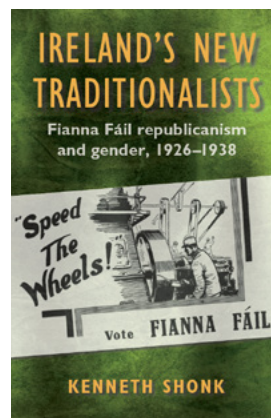
It's a significant reworking of my doctoral dissertation and I felt that the scholarship would be of interest to a wider audience.

• What in your research surprised you the most?

The book explores the visual culture of the Irish political party Fianna Fáil between the world wars. What surprised me most about this visual culture put forth by the party was how similar it was to what was being produced on the European continent at the same time, namely how the party's electoral material seemed to reflect the same anxieties and dissatisfaction with the political and economic solutions to governmental responses to the Great Depression. This sentiment was also informed by Ireland's status as a former colony of Great Britain. What stands out is the desire by Fianna Fáil to correct these problems by redefining concepts of Irish masculinity and Irish femininity.

• Who is the book's main audience?

Academic, though the larger Irish public has a keen interest in reading such books.



• Was this your first book?

This is my second. Co-author of "History theory and methods through popular music, 1970-2000" with Daniel R. McClure (Fort Hays State University) (Palgrave, 2017)

ROTC instructor is tops in Wisconsin, Midwest



An Eagle Battalion instructor has received high teaching marks in Wisconsin — and across the Midwest.

Sgt. 1st Class JoAnn Wampole-Swanson has been named the Wisconsin Military Science Instructor of the Year, recognizing her as the No. 1 Wisconsin Army National Guard Instructor. That honor put her in the running for a similar honor in the Midwest.

Wampole-Swanson won that too, being named the Midwest Brigade's Instructor of the Year. The brigade includes 47 ROTC programs across the Midwest in Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan's Upper Peninsula, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

Wampole-Swanson teaches first-year students from UWL and Viterbo University in the Eagle Battalion.

Lt. Col. Erik Archer, chair of the Military Science Department, says Wampole-Swanson is an exceptional teacher and leader. He calls receiving both distinctions an "incredible honor," but "absolutely appropriate."

"She is passionate, welcoming, dedicated and every student leaves her

classroom feeling like they're part of a special team," says Archer.

Wampole-Swanson, who has been at UWL for two-and-a-half years, enjoys being an instructor and mentor to cadets growing and developing as future leaders in the U.S. Army.



Sgt. 1st Class JoAnn Wampole-Swanson

When the university switched to virtual classes in March 2020 due to COVID-19, she reached out to her students — weekly.

"I would call my students each week just to be in contact and see how they were handling the change and to make sure they were financially sound and if they had food and necessities that they would need while social distancing at home," she explains. "Being an NCO/Instructor is like being a parent. You think about them like your own children

and hope they make right choices, but more importantly, learn from their mistakes."

Ever humble, Wampole-Swanson says it's an honor to serve the Army and UWL.

"I am thankful for being a part of what makes our future a great one," she says. "I believe in our institution and the great people it provides to a great nation. It is an honor to serve, and I am extremely grateful that my Army career has brought me here to UWL."

What's the Eagle Battalion like?

This short, end-of-the-year assignment by an Eagle Battalion member gives an **inside view:**

Challenge champs: Eagle Battalion wins

Snow, ice and frigid temperatures were no match for UWL's Eagle Battalion, as it earned a hard-fought victory over teams from across the Midwest during the Northern Warfare Challenge in February.

The Eagle Battalion hosted the annual challenge, testing the endurance and strength of a record 29 teams,

The Eagle Battalion won the annual Northern Warfare Challenge on Grandad Bluff. The winter event tested the endurance and strength of a record 29 teams in February.

including an Air Force ROTC team flying in from Boston College. The teams marched 16 miles through Hixon Forest, with soldiers carrying 45-pound packs on their backs and taking part in knot-tying, fire-starting and marksmanship competitions, along with being evaluated on evacuating a simulated casualty. Participants also took a written test.

“There’s nothing like this in ROTC, and our students plan and execute the entire thing,” says Lt. Col. Erik Archer, chair of the UWL Military Science Department. “They begin planning in October and at this point hold daily meetings to confirm plans and finalize efforts. They are incredible.”

The event’s professionalism, challenge and design continue to gain attention. Cadet Command’s Command Sgt. Maj. Jeremiah Gann, the senior enlisted soldier who oversees all ROTC programs nationwide, attended the event to observe and engage with competitors.

Strict COVID-19 protocols added to this year’s planning executed by students in the Eagle Battalion, which includes students from UWL, Viterbo University, Winona State University and Saint Mary’s University in Winona.

Lead planners were UWL students Michael Hennig and Jordan Schuler.



See more about the challenge:

A SILVER RATING SUPPORTING MILITARY STUDENTS

UWL is among the most military friendly schools nationwide, according to the 2021-22 Military Friendly Schools survey. UWL earned a silver designation this year, an improvement over a bronze last year. More than 1,200 schools nationwide participated, with 747 campuses identified as military friendly. The silver rating is the third-highest mark a school can receive.

Collaborative Language Program earns prestigious distinction

UW System’s Collaborative Language Program has a new feather in its cap. And UWL faculty had a lot to do with it.

The program was recently included in the America’s Languages Guide to Exemplary Programs and Practices in U.S. Language Education — a list of exemplary and accessible language programs at all U.S. education levels.

For 20 years, the program has exposed thousands of UW System students a wide array of online language courses. UWL shares courses in German, French, Russian and Chinese, and receives courses in Japanese and Arabic.

Long before COVID-19 forced classes online, professors in the program were well-versed in teaching virtually and fostering long-distance connections.

UWL Professor Natalia Roberts, who has taught Russian in the program for 16 years, says she and other faculty receive training on the latest teaching technology.

“Students enjoy applying their knowledge and interacting with their peers during synchronous live lessons with different campuses,” Roberts explains. “They also benefit from the native speakers who bring regional and generational diversity to the cohort.”

ABOUT THE COLLABORATIVE LANGUAGE PROGRAM

Founded in 1998, UW System’s Collaborative Language Program improves access to language courses, particularly languages critical to Wisconsin and the U.S. economy and national security. Instructors reach students across UW campuses using blended and online learning. Approximately 350 students take part each semester.

A **critical** look at criminal justice

Profs evaluate success of local criminal justice diversion programs

Two UWL professors are helping extend compassion and opportunity to those who have committed nonviolent drug offenses and those who struggle with “co-occurring disorders” — the presence of both mental health and substance use issues.

Lisa Kruse and Nick Bakken, both of the Sociology & Criminal Justice Department, are partnering with La Crosse County to evaluate the county’s drug court and Fresh Start programs. The programs allow drug offenders to redeem themselves through treatment and counseling rather than jail or prison time — a model the professors say is more humane and effective than being tough on crime.

“First of all, it’s a lot cheaper in the long run to provide this support than it is to incarcerate someone



Lisa Kruse, Sociology & Criminal Justice Department

away for \$36,000 a year,” Kruse notes. “Also, incarcerating people doesn’t address the root of their criminality or get them to abstain from crime in the future. This is often a mental health issue, and our money would make more of an impact if it’s used to give people the health and support that they need. We’ve tried the old method for the past 30 years, and it’s not working.”

Through a U.S. Bureau of Justice grant, Kruse and Bakken collected data to evaluate drug court and Fresh Start outcomes. Traditionally, La Crosse County’s drug court program has had a lower rate of successful graduates than the national average.

But these struggles do not necessarily fall at the feet of the program. Kruse and Bakken note that drug court participants seem engaged in the process, maintaining good relationships with the court and the drug court team.

A major issue, they say, lies elsewhere.

“We’re finding that even those who graduate often end up relapsing back into addiction,” Kruse says. “A lot of the issues with success are based on a lack of available housing and lack of access to treatment

programs. We've watched individuals wait months to get into a treatment program, and when you're just starting out on your sobriety, you're going to have a hard time."

Often, long wait times lead to relapses, and relapses lead to jail or prison.

According to Bakken, incarceration has destructive effects on not just the individual, but others in their orbit as well.

"When someone goes to prison, it doesn't just affect that person. It also affects their family, children and community — everyone they left behind," he explains. "This creates a disorganized community, limits a community's ability to remain crime-free, and makes everyone less safe in the long run.

"There's a sense of humanity in providing funding (for housing, treatment and other supports).

It may be costly up front, but you'll gain that money back with reduced criminality and less time in jail over time."

Kruse and Bakken completed their evaluation in June 2020 and will present their findings to La Crosse County's Criminal Justice Management Council this summer. In the past, their work has allowed the county to pinpoint areas for improvement, and served as a springboard for meaningful change.

Before evaluating the drug court and Fresh Start programs, Kruse and Bakken investigated La Crosse's school-to-prison pipeline — specifically, why minority youths were being arrested at a higher rate than their peers.

As a result of this collaboration, county, city and school district officials created the System of Care School Justice Partnership. The system identifies several delinquent acts that are better handled with intervention and graduated school sanctions than court-imposed punishment.

For Kruse and Bakken, it's gratifying to help drive positive change, and to bring those lessons to students.

"As an academic, you learn about theories, best practices and the history of the system. But being able to work in the community gives you a real intimate look into the workings of the system from a practitioner's perspective," Kruse says. "Those are really valuable lessons to bring back into the classroom. When students have questions, I'm in a much better position to humanize the issue and give them real-world examples."

Sociology and Criminal Justice professors Nick Bakken, pictured, and Lisa Kruse are collecting data to evaluate La Crosse County's criminal justice programs. "When someone goes to prison, it doesn't just affect that person," explains Bakken, shown in this 2019 photo. "It also affects their family, children and community — everyone left behind."





HISTORICELECTION

Alum is first Black Republican in Badger State Senate

Julian Bradley and his late mother, Alexandra, were on opposite ends of the political spectrum.

But Bradley credits Alexandra, a staunch Democrat who marched with Martin Luther King Jr. and worked on presidential campaigns for Jesse

Jackson and Michael Dukakis, for igniting his passion for politics.

In November, Bradley rode that passion to a resounding victory in the District 28 Wisconsin State Senate race, making him the first Black Republican to win a seat in the legislature's upper chamber.

“Even though we ended up on different outlooks, it was my mom who showed me that one passionate person can make a difference,” says Bradley, a political science major. “From the time I was little, she instilled in me the importance of volunteerism and giving back.”

Julian Bradley, '14, won the District 28 Wisconsin State Senate race in November, making him the first Black Republican to win a seat in the legislature's upper chamber. Bradley credits his late mother, a staunch Democrat, for igniting his passion for politics.

Bradley's path to public office was highly unconventional.

His family didn't come from money. Alexandra was a single mother, and she would tell her children that the government assistance they received was not "free money." It was a community investment in their future.

After graduating from La Crosse Central High School, Bradley decided to forego college and enter the workforce, which included a part-time gig as a professional wrestler. A mountain of a man, Bradley joined Philadelphia's independent wrestling scene and portrayed the humorous villain Kris Krude — a combination of former professional wrestler Rick Rude and Chris Farley's Chippendales character from Saturday Night Live.

"My experience in wrestling was important in teaching me how to step outside of my comfort zone and how to be comfortable in front of a crowd," Bradley explains. "Those skills certainly translate well into campaigning for public office."

Bradley eventually enrolled at Temple University in Philadelphia. He transferred to UWL to be closer to

his mother as she dealt with health problems. She died in 2009.

Bradley continued to chip away at his bachelor's degree in political science, balancing coursework with a full-time management role at La Crosse's CenturyLink.

Earning a degree "remains one of my proudest accomplishments," he says. That perseverance also served him well in politics.

In 2010, Bradley lost in the Republican primary for the 95th Assembly District, which includes the city of La Crosse.

In 2014, he lost in the general election for Wisconsin Secretary of State.

And in 2016, he lost in the general election for the 94th Assembly District, which includes most of La Crosse County outside the city limits.

But he never withdrew from politics — serving as vice chairman and chairman of the La Crosse County GOP, and later as the party's vice chairman in the Third Congressional District. And he never got too discouraged to pick himself up and try again.

His resolve finally paid off in August 2020, when he emerged from a crowded Republican primary field and cruised to victory in Wisconsin's traditionally conservative southeastern 28th District.

"As difficult as losing is, I've always been committed to staying involved, even if I was never a candidate again," he says. "My motivation has always been the desire to serve and to give back."

Becoming the first Black Republican to serve in the State Senate, he says, made his recent breakthrough even more meaningful.

"Being chosen by my community to represent them in the Senate is a great honor in and of itself," he notes. "The historical nature of my election means a lot to me, and I hope it inspires other candidates to get involved. It's important to note that minority involvement in politics, for both parties, is still very low. That trend started to change this year when we saw more minorities than ever run for office on both sides of the aisle."



The UWL Screaming Eagles Marching Band didn't have any football game performances last fall due to COVID-19. But 10 members took part in a virtual college marching band show that premiered online during halftime of the College Football Playoff National Championship Game Jan. 11, 2021.

SNAP **March on** — on a national stage

COVID-19 kept most college marching bands off the football field last fall, but some took part in January's national championship game.

The UWL Screaming Eagles Marching Band had 10 students in the College Band Directors National Association Intercollegiate Marching Band. They stepped off with nearly 1,500 performers from 200 bands in 45 states and Puerto Rico.

The virtual college marching band performed "End of Time" by Beyonce in a video premiering online during halftime. **View it here:**

SEMB Director Tammy Fisher says it was exciting taking part. SEMB members included:

- Hannah Prellwitz, senior, Drum Major
- Hayley Rathmell, senior, Drum Major
- Patrick Zalewski, junior, Drum Major
- Jen Turski, junior, Color Guard
- Aimee Eifert, junior, Color Guard
- Kayla Feehan, senior, Tenor Sax
- James Koeberl, sophomore, Trumpet
- Alison Stell, senior, Flute
- Kamilah Gobran, senior, Tenor drums
- Sam Hantzsch, senior, Tenor drums