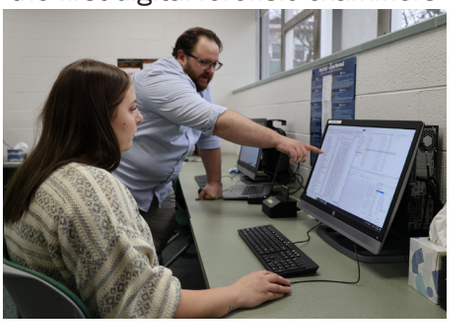
# Connections

Fall 2024 COLLEGE OF LETTERS AND SCIENCE www.uwsp.edu/cols


## Shaping a Future for Students in Digital Forensics

When you think of evidence that can be used in court cases, recovered data on an electronic device maybe isn't the first thing that comes to mind. However, it is critical that trained technicians can draw on their expertise to gather evidence that can trace digital fingerprints.

In the coming weeks, there will be a resource right at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point for that very circumstance with students engaged directly in forensic analysis and data recovery work. Computer Information Systems-Cybersecurity major Brady Peer will be one of the first digital forensic examiners working in the newly launched Digital Forensics and Recovery Analysis Lab (DFRAL).



***Chad Johnson shows a student the data analysis software for work in the new Digital Forensics and Recovery Analysis Lab.***

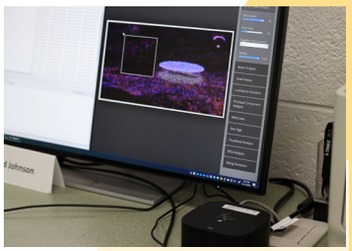
Peer installed the software for the center's computers and helped organize workstations for inspecting and analyzing devices. From cell phones and tablets to computer components, the staff of the DFRAL will tackle cyber investigation and data recovery services for the UWSP community and beyond.

With a minor in Criminal Justice, the Green Bay junior said the experiences he can gain in the DFRAL will give him practical technical capabilities in digital forensics to give him an edge. Peer said he became intrigued by the field following his first cybersecurity course on campus.

"In solving problems working with data, it is so satisfying to find the piece of evidence you're looking for," Peer said.

He had prior experience in his required course work by running simulations. Now, in his role working in the DFRAL, Peer will have the unique opportunity to troubleshoot for real-world clients and gain specialized skills in forensic analysis and data recovery.

"It takes a rare set of skills that we make available to people," said Chad Johnson, lead coordinator of the DFRAL and assistant professor in the Department of Computing and New Media Technologies (CNMT).



***Forensic software installed on a lab computer.***

The lab will closely mirror the digital forensics process used by IT security professionals. The tools and knowledge students can gain will allow them to hone their critical thinking skills as they develop their technical investigative capabilities.

With funding secured from the College of Letters and Science Innovation Fund, Johnson began to put together plans for the necessary equipment— servers, computer monitors, diagnostic equipment— tools of the trade in cyber intelligence and forensics. The focus in cybersecurity is to use data skills in defense of problems, but in setting up the DFRAL as a working lab experience, Johnson said, he hoped to give students that sense of urgency in information security and that willingness to be of service to others.

Johnson said the industry needs people who can step into complex forensic investigations with confidence.

"It benefits CNMT by providing a dedicated space where we can offer specialized digital forensics services to industry professionals who lack that training," said Johnson.

Peer aspires to work as a federal investigator in the digital space. Students like him interested in the industry may potentially get immersed in data investigations on behalf of clients across the region and state-wide.

The DFRAL in the UWSP Science Building will have approval to begin client work in early 2025.

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DISCOVER YOUR PURPOSE

# Building Naming to Recognize Alumni Couple

Frank and Kathleen Haeni, 1970 graduates and longtime educators prior to their retirement, have supported students at their alma mater through four endowed scholarships in the College of Letters and Science (COLS) and the College of Natural Resources. With their latest gift comes a naming of the Chemistry Biology Building (CBB) at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point in recognition of their significant contributions to the university. The Haeni Chemistry Biology Building will be dedicated at a later date.

***Alumni Frank and Kathleen Haeni will be recognized for their support of UWSP with the naming of the Haeni Chemistry Biology Building in 2025.***

"We thank the university for this great honor and are humbled by this generous gesture," said the couple. "Our love for the university has grown exponentially since we started our educational journey. It is our hope and desire to continue paying it forward to future generations of Stevens Point students."

Previously, the two alumni of biology were honored with the naming of the CBB Haeni Lecture Hall in 2021. The Haenis have also supported faculty-mentored undergraduate research, the COLS Undergraduate Research Symposium and the Olson Museum of Natural History. Their most recent commitment created an endowment to fund laboratory repairs and equipment purchases and maintenance for the CBB.

Kathleen was a seventh and eighth grade science teacher for 24 years and Frank taught science education for 33 years. Now retired, the couple spend time maintaining their property in Crivitz, where Frank is a naturalist and woodworker. He donated more than a dozen wooden benches and tables to the university which he carved from an oak tree grown on campus.

# SAVE THE DATE!

26th Annual

## College of Letters and Science Undergraduate Research Symposium

The College will celebrate an outstanding group of student researchers representing projects from across COLS majors. The Annual Undergraduate Research Symposium is scheduled for May 2, 2025 in the Haeni Chemistry Biology Building. This signature event will feature over 100 research posters and oral presentations taking place throughout the building. We hope you will be able to join us for this culminating experience for our students and their faculty mentors, families and friends.

## Message from the Dean

**Dear Friends of UW-Stevens Point's College of Letters and Science,**

**As we close out the fall 2024 semester, I am pleased to share this newsletter highlighting some of the great achievements across the college, including in academic excellence, innovative research, hands-on learning and community engagement. Once again, students, faculty and staff have excelled in teaching, research and service and contributed to the overall mission of the university.**

**We should be proud of our accomplishments this fall and eager to continue this great progress into the spring semester. As always, thank you for your dedication and commitment!**

**Joshua Hagen**

University of Wisconsin Stevens Point

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## Cornerstone Press Author Honored with WLA Fiction Award

This fall, the Wisconsin Library Association (WLA) recognized one of the works published by the university's Cornerstone Press. Wisconsin author Jeff Esterholm was recognized for his short story collection "The Effects of Urban Renewal on Mid-Century America and other Crime Stories." Esterholm received the Outstanding Achievement Award in the 2024 Literary Awards.

"To have Jeff's outstanding collection honored in this way is beyond thrilling," said Cornerstone press director and publisher Dr. Ross Tangedal. "The press is proud to call Jeff Esterholm one of our authors, and we are so very excited for him to receive this prestigious honor."

The WLA honored five fiction authors with its highest literary awards in November.

## Free Speech Series Events

Plans are underway for the second event in the College of Letters and Science Free Speech Symposium. Congress to Campus will feature two retired Members of Congress to discuss civic service and to encourage honest, respectful dialogue across partisan lines.

Students, faculty and community members joined a robust group discussion on free speech principles in the Dreyfus University Center Laird Room on Sept. 17, 2024. Professor John Blakeman, Department of Political Science, is the lead organizer of events.

Thanks to a grant from the Menard Center for the Study of Institutions & Innovations, the series will host campus events in mid-February with invited former members of U.S. Congress during the spring semester. Locations are TBA.

**Congress to Campus**
**Feb. 16-18, 2025**

MENARD CSII
Elevating Civil Liberties

## College of Letters and Science Arrivals

### FACULTY

Lara Garrido – World Languages and Literatures
Olivia Gerrish – Sociology and Social Work
Rebecca Koch – Biology
Swetalina Maity – Mathematical Sciences
Kevin Stindt – Chemistry and Biochemistry
Lauren Wood – History and International Studies

### INSTRUCTIONAL ACADEMIC STAFF

Cale Hoppe – Mathematical Sciences
Yun-Rong Wang – Fulbright Language Teaching Assistant

### STAFF

Amy Quisenberry Faustine – Administrative Assistant for SMCPA
Brett Hill – Cornerstone Press Editor
Katherine McClure – NADF
Tanya Wayda – Administrative Program Specialist for Program Growth

***Community members, students and UWSP faculty engaged in the Free Speech on Campus event on Sept. 17, 2024 in the Dreyfus University Center. The moderator was Department of Political Science Professor John Blakeman.***

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# GIS Mapping Tools Breathe Life into Census Data

## Research Presentation for GIS Day

*Alumni guest presenters for Nov. 20, 2024 GIS Day were: left, Megan Karczewski, GIS analyst at Stantec, center, Megan Banaski, Esri senior product manager, and right, Matt Domzalski, Cyclomedia solution specialist.*

**Watch Here**

Now celebrating 25 years GIS Day, celebrated on November 20, highlights the depth of access to geographic information system data and the latest tools in mapping to ignite the imagination.

GIS Day was the ideal timing to showcase some fascinating historical Stevens Point genealogy data using computerized mapping tools. The UWSP University Archives Records manager, Brad Casselberry, and graduating student Jarita Bavido, used data bases contributed by Dr. Toshiyuki Sanos and began to work toward interactive, searchable GIS maps. They presented the newly developed mapping identifying immigration and settlement patterns in Stevens Point and explained how the tool can be utilized through an internet browser. The Department of Geography and Geology chair and GIS instructional administrator Doug Miskowiak coordinated the presentation, "Breathing Life into the Historical Census."

Earlier in the day, current students had a chance to attend two alumni panels hosted by graduates of the UWSP geospatial sciences degree. The panelists discussed the opportunities and challenges in professional career paths for GIS graduates.

## CNMT Earns National Excellence Designation

The UWSP cybersecurity program has recently earned the backing of the National Security Agency (NSA) Center of Academic Excellence (CAE). This prestigious designation acknowledges the commitment of the Department of Computing and New Media Technologies (CNMT) to high standards in cybersecurity education, research, and workforce development. This recognition brings added credibility to the Computer Information Systems degree.

Assistant professor Chad Johnson applied on behalf of the CIS: Cybersecurity program and received the designation over the summer. The designation will be valid for an initial period of five years after which there is a renewal process.

UWSP joins about 400 institutions across the United States which have earned a Centers for Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense (CAE-CD) designation. Johnson's advocacy for the initiative helps greatly to enhance the quality and effectiveness of the student experience.

"The designation is proof positive that we've got the support and the expertise we need to keep pushing this forward. We are growing what is undeniably the best cyber program in the Midwest," Johnson said.

Institutions earning the CAE-CD actively engage in solutions to challenges facing cybersecurity education.

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