Connections

Spring 2023 COLLEGE OF LETTERS AND SCIENCE www.uwsp.edu/cols

Celebrating a Legacy of Environmental Ethics

J. Baird Callicott's teaching emphasis had been ancient Greek philosophy when he volunteered to lead an ethics course exploring human interactions with the natural environment. It was unchartered territory—no syllabus, no textbooks and nothing but his desire to lead the first course, in the fall of 1971.

Five decades later, the world's first ethics program has informed thousands of students since its origin at UW-Stevens Point. The university held a celebration event on April 5, 2023, with guest panelists, current and past leaders of the program, and Callicott to reflect on how Philosophy 380: Environmental Ethics would influence his teaching, scholarship and life-long study.

J. Baird Callicott discusses the longevity of the UW-Stevens Point Environmental Ethics course in the DUC Laird Room, April 5, 2023.

Callicott, now a retired University Distinguished Research Professor and Regents Professor of Philosophy at the University of North Texas, shared the stage with UWSP alumnus Bob Ramlow, founding member of the Midwest Renewable Energy Association. It was Ramlow, then a senior majoring in natural resources, who introduced Callicott to the writings of forester Aldo Leopold in A Sand County Almanac, much of it observations of his environment in Sauk County, Wisconsin. The men had ongoing discussions about the passages in the book.

Far from the abundance of well-recognized journals and books on environmental ethics published today, in the early days, academic literature was hard to obtain in the emerging field.

"There's been a tremendous amount of diversification over time," said Callicott, "Practically every field has responded to the environmental crisis."

Environmental Ethics at UW-Stevens Point was a response to the organization of Earth Day in 1970. The national environmental movement and growing advocacy efforts were spurred by the brainchild of environmentalist Sen. Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin.

Earth Day at UWSP generally involved impassioned speeches on the need for environmental reforms and day-long activities across campus, said Callicott.

Leopold's influence, including his argument for the "land ethic" and its moral code of conduct for people, formed the basis for Callicott's course. Although the university provided curriculum in conservation and biology, prior to Environmental Ethics, there was no instruction that addressed the human side and implications for environmental actions. Callicott personally recruited students in the College of Natural Resources to take the course, filling two sections that first semester.

"Mostly because they needed it!" remarked Callicott. Not one to take credit for the course's lasting academic legacy, Callicott's pride in his role developing the longest-running environmental ethics course was visible during his presentation for the gathered audience in the Dreyfus University Center's Laird Room.

Professor of environmental ethics and philosophy at Oregon State University's College of Forestry, Michael Nelson lead the UWSP course from 1993 to 2004.

"I'm just stunned by how influential it was. I have students who are now professors, they use the framework to this day," said Nelson.

Nelson studied under Callicott as a graduate student and went on to collaborate with him in multiple books and journal articles, reflecting on the human moral responsibility to the natural world. He now teaches a course in environmental ethics and imagination to teach students strategies for navigating future challenges.

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Your Gift Makes a Difference!

To create a legacy at UW-Stevens Point, please contact Amanda Gilman at 715-346-3406 or email amanda.gilman@uwsp.edu. Thank you for your consideration!

DISCOVER YOUR PURPOSE

Alum estate gift honors late COLS dean

Beginning this fall, eight scholarships for both first-year and continuing students will support students in STEM and business fields.

The estate gift of Jeffrey and Sally Fiddler ('61) is among the 10 largest donations to UW-Stevens Point and the largest endowment for student scholarships. UW-Stevens Point alumna Sally Fiddler wanted to honor the late Dean Warren Jenkins in making their estate gift. She taught in the Chicago educational system for much of her career. Jenkins was instrumental in helping Sally Emmel complete her UWSP degree. Jenkins was the first dean of the College of Letters and Science.

This year two $4,000 scholarships will be awarded to a student in math and one to a student in computing and new media technologies. The scholarship will provide eight scholarships yearly, four $2,000 scholarships for first-year students majoring in science, technology, math, business administration, accounting or engineering. Continuing students in STEM fields will be awarded two $4,000 scholarships and two $4,000 scholarships will be available for continuing students in accounting or business-related fields.

View Undergraduate Research Symposium Opening Presentation

Search UWStevensPointCOLS on YouTube

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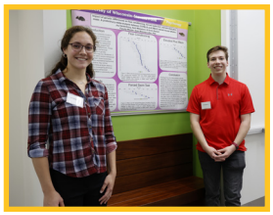
Students Showcase High-Impact Research in Symposium

Students and their faculty mentors were energized, presenting on more than 100 research projects in the 24th Annual Undergraduate Research Symposium on May 5, 2023. The Chemistry Biology Building hosted the event for the first time. The CBB walls were adorned by the research posters of 150 students from across the College of Letters and Science.



Students from all four schools presented their oral and poster presentations at the May 5, 2023 Undergraduate Research Symposium.

The event began with a welcome presentation by Department of Biology chair, associate professor Brian Barringer, emphasizing the collaborative, interdisciplinary approach to the study of cannabis. Several ongoing projects on uses and growth of cannabis now involve a number of faculty and nearly 20 research students. Curriculum development is underway for a planned 2024 graduate certificate.

Students gave oral presentations in the humanities, social sciences, mathematics, and biology. Guests and students could tour three floors of the CBB to learn about the faculty-mentored and independent research projects on display.

We have a proud history of showcasing student-centered research in the College of Letters and Science. Your gift to Partners in Discovery drives future innovation in undergraduate research. We know that the research experience is valuable preparation for careers and future graduate study. When we support student curiosity and creativity in research, it can lead to projects that address real-world needs in Central Wisconsin and beyond.

Continued from Celebrating a Legacy cover

"It shows up in the world in important ways. The rights of nature, whether it be discussions of the rights of rivers, grappling with how to live, or other conservation questions," Nelson said, "The moral inclusion is always there."

Environmental Ethics enrolls about 300 students every year at UWSP. It is incorporated into 30 academic programs within the College of Natural Resources, 35 programs outside of the Department of Philosophy.

"It has the highest enrollment of any course our department offers," said philosophy professor Chris Diehm, current Environmental Ethics program director.

Virtually any discipline can benefit from the study of ethical reasoning. Diehm said enrollment is also typically at capacity for related courses including Animal Ethics and Food Ethics.

No longer a rare offering, it's become more common than not to find courses in environmental ethics across U.S. college course catalogs. Although global in scope now, the study of environmental ethics is forever tied to UWSP's Department of Philosophy and the determination to lead the dialogue and evolution of environmental thought. The study will continue to shift just as the relationship between people and the planet continues to evolve.

Message from the Dean

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

It is my pleasure to once again share some of the many accomplishments of students, faculty, and staff across the college.

This has been a very eventful and productive year, including the relaunch of our Community Engagement Series, innovations in curriculum and instruction, successful grant proposals, numerous awards and recognitions, and humbling support from our friends and communities.

It is not possible to cover all the good news across the college or recognize all the hard work and dedication that went into making that happen, but please know you have my sincere thanks.

Have a great summer!

Joshua Hagen

Dean Joshua Hagen presents the Katz Distinguished Faculty Award to professor Nancy LoPatin-Lummis at the May 10, 2023 Spring College Meeting.

2023 AWARDS

Distinguished Faculty and University Awards

Our congratulations to Department of History and International Studies Professor Nancy LoPatin-Lummis, this year's winner of the Eugene Katz Letters and Science Distinguished Faculty Award.

In her 34 years of service to UWSP, Nancy contributed immensely to the training, support, and success of her students. She has a long record of university community service work. In addition to teaching, she has served as associate dean for University College and director of General Education. She has written and co-authored dozens of articles for historical journals and books.

The Katz award recognizes ongoing excellence in teaching and/or scholarship. The award is presented through the generosity of and in memory of Eugene Katz, a long-time friend of UW-Stevens Point.

Philosophy Adds Law and Justice

Beginning this fall, students may enroll in a new law and justice concentration of the philosophy major. A collaboration with the State Public Defender office in Stevens Point, Wausau, and Wisconsin Rapids offers students hands on learning opportunities in four internships each semester.

The program focus is on analyzing the relationship between law and ethics, justice, freedom, power, rights, knowledge, truth, and justification. Understanding these relationships is not incidental to law; they are critical and essential components of it. Philosophy: Law and Justice will prepare students interested in non-profit work, work for NGOs, paralegal work, social services, and criminal justice, more broadly.

Congratulations!

Eight members of the COLS faculty were honored with 2022-2023 University Awards

Academic Staff Excellence Award:

- School of Humanities and Global Studies assistant dean Tobias Barske, shown left, with Chancellor Thomas Gibson, right.

University Excellence in Teaching awards:

- Associate professor David Chunyu, (Sociology), shown left with Chancellor Thomas Gibson, right.
- Associate professor Amanda Jonsson (Chemistry)
- Assistant professor Ellen Meier (Psychology)

University Scholar awards:

- Professor Nate Bowling (Chemistry)
- Professor Qiang Sun (Biology)

University Service Award:

- Associate Professor Jess Bowers (Social Work)

University Excellence in Teaching, Scholarship and Service Award:

- Assistant Professor Sarah Orlofske (Biology)

University of Wisconsin
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COLLEGE OF LETTERS AND SCIENCE RETIREMENTS

- Dan Breining, World Languages and Literature
- Pat Gott, English
- Nancy Lopatin-Lummis, History and International Studies
- Robert Rosenfield, Biology
- Tony Timmerman, Chemistry
- Nathan Wetzel, Mathematical Sciences

Engagement Series Examines Artificial Intelligence Topics

When Robots Rule the World

Even before we'd heard about ChatGPT, the College was embarking on a series related to artificial intelligence (AI) in the relaunch of a community engagement series for the 2022-2023 academic year.

COLS faculty held a series of seven lectures at the Portage County Public Library on topics ranging from privacy and security issues to speech and language bias in AI, even legal principles for robot rights. The series also included film screenings on campus.

In the series finale, on May 2, the faculty presenters held a final panel in the Dreyfus University Center Theater. You can watch it and all the recorded lectures at **uwsp.edu/whenrobotsrule.**

Our special thanks to UWSP professors, Vera Klekovkina, chair of the Department of World Languages and Literatures, for her organization of the topics, Cary Elza, media studies, Tomi Heimonen, computing and new media technologies, Joshua Horn, philosophy, Patrick Conley, psychology, and James Berry, English. Future engagement series events will be scheduled for the fall of 2023.

Office Recognized for Working Green

Green Recognition
of Offices and Workspaces

The COLS Dean's Office is one of the first two UW-Stevens Point offices to earn the Gold GROW certification. Green Recognition of Offices and Workspaces (GROW) is an initiative of the Office of Sustainability to challenge staff and students to foster more environmentally-friendly workspaces through individual and collective actions.

Over the course of the year, the Dean's Office staff took steps to complete requirements of the Green Recognition of Offices and Workspaces (GROW) program to earn a gold certification. Gold is the highest level of recognition!

Alumni Spotlight: Gigi Stahl

UWSP Graduation: 2018
Degree: English

Current Position: EDI program specialist, Stevens Point Area Public School District

With a Masters in Social Work, Gigi Stahl focuses her work on seeing all people and addressing systemic and relational barriers that prevent people from living their fullest life. She believes in meeting people where they are while challenging them to achieve a better sense of community. She currently does so as an equity, diversity, and inclusion program specialist for the Stevens Point Public School District and was named as one of Wisconsin's 52 Most Influential Black Leaders in 2022 by the Madison 365 news site.

Social Media

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The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Institution and a tobacco-free campus.

www.uwsp.edu/cols

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