



Connections

Fall 2022

COLLEGE OF LETTERS AND SCIENCE

www.uwsp.edu/cols

Skyward Scholars Provides New Student Opportunities

The 20-foot signage installed on the walls of the Skyward Fieldhouse is hard to miss. The arched blue company logos mark the long collaboration between Skyward and UW-Stevens Point. The university's former Multi Activity Center (MAC) officially took the new Skyward Fieldhouse namesake in a ceremony on September 2.

An exciting element of the partnership is just beginning to take shape. Skyward announced a multi-year award to provide scholarship opportunities and curricular support for the UWSP Computing and New Media Technologies Department students who pursue a career in programming.

Skyward Scholars will be awarded an annual scholarship for their four years on campus, reducing barriers for qualified students pursuing CIS programs. The endowment will support five students each year and, when possible, program support for CNMT.

Students will continue to have internship opportunities at Skyward. The campus Skyward Internship Center opened inside the Science Building just over a year ago, in November 2021. According to Skyward CEO Scott Glinski, UWSP alumni make up two of every five employees.

"The Skyward Fieldhouse reflects the importance and ongoing commitment Skyward places on education," said Glinski. "We couldn't be happier to continue our long-standing partnership with UWSP through this dedication."



The dedication of the Skyward Fieldhouse in Champions Hall was held Sept. 2, 2022. Skyward founders and current leaders joined with members of the Portage County Business Council, Chancellor Thomas Gibson, and Stevens Point Mayor Mike Wiza for the ribbon cutting.



UWSP '80 alum and founder of Skyward Jim King, right, and his son, Skyward Board Chair Jerry King, center, uncover the Skyward Fieldhouse naming plaque as Chancellor Thomas Gibson, left, applauds.

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Alum-named Homecoming Scholarship Awarded



It was a perfect way to connect alumni and students. The College of Letters and Science encouraged students to enter a drawing at Homecoming for a \$500 scholarship.

Alumni were able to enter for a chance to have the scholarship named after them for the year!

Miah Peterson '25 will receive the 2022 Douglas McMillan '78 L&S Homecoming Scholarship toward her fall semester tuition. Congratulations, Miah!

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COLS Fulbright Scholars Teaching Abroad

It is an honor for two COLS professors, sharing their valuable teaching experiences abroad as part of the prestigious Fulbright Scholar Award.

Associate Professor **Krista Slemmons**, biology, will teach students from across Europe next semester through her Fulbright Scholar Award located at the University of Málaga's Geology and Ecology Department. She is preparing to teach—in English—a course focused on climate change impacts, and three seminar workshops on writing in the sciences to master's and doctoral students in the Faculty of Science at the University.

Slemmons will work in close collaboration with faculty who have the same research focus as she does, all located at the foothills of the Sierra Nevada National Park, a biodiversity hotspot. While in Spain, she will focus on two questions: How has the recession of glaciers and shifts in climate altered aquatic communities in the mountains and are these ecosystem shifts similar to other high elevation lakes across the globe? As a teaching scholar, Slemmons hopes to imbed this research experience within the classroom. This spring, she will collect sediment samples from the lake bottom, process samples, and analyze them when she returns to UWSP, in the summer.

Since learning of the award, she's been in touch regularly with colleagues who are helping to connect Slemmons with housing and other logistics for her four-month assignment at the University of Málaga.

Then, there's the preparation for the rest of her household. Slemmons and her husband, Caleb, have three children, ages 7, 11, and 14. She has coordinated their school enrollments and is helping them with Spanish language practice.

She is excited to immerse her children in a new culture.

"I've always wanted to work and live abroad," said Slemmons. "It's a good time for it personally and professionally."

Department of Mathematical Sciences professor **Andy Felt** began his fall semester preparing to lead courses for faculty and students of Gdańsk University of Technology in Poland. It's part of an international program of the Polish-U.S. Fulbright Commission. Professor Felt was honored to receive a 2022-2023 Fulbright grant to teach Introductory Modeling and PBL method (Project/ Problem Based Learning) in the university's Applied Physics and Mathematics Department. As part of the program, Felt will deliver curriculum classes for faculty of Gdańsk Tech.

He meets with students once a week to teach a university course on decision-making using AMPL, a mathematical programming language. It's a challenge to cover the material in 90 minutes as opposed to teaching his course several times a week at UWSP.

"I'm hoping to learn about the differences in the higher education systems, so I can take some things back to UWSP to make my teaching better back there," said Felt.

The urban campus is surrounded by old growth forest that Professor Felt has enjoyed exploring, he said.

The Fulbright grantees attended a welcoming ceremony at the home of U.S. Ambassador to Poland Mark Brzezinski a previous Fulbright Scholar. The visit aims to be the first step towards a joint international study program between UWSP and the Internationalization Committee of Gdańsk Tech.



Department of Biology
Associate Professor
Krista Slemmons



Department of Mathematical
Sciences Professor
Andy Felt

You're Invited!

24th Annual

COLS UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

MAY 5, 2023

PARTNERS IN DISCOVERY

Your Gift Makes a Difference!

Our vision for the Research Symposium empowers more UWSP students and funds lasting research opportunities. Gifts in any amount will help increase research symposium involvement, provide for achievement awards and guide meaningful student work for the next decade!

You can partner with us, select COLS Symposium Support Fund at give.uwsp.edu/cols-give-now
Thank you for your consideration!



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College of Letters and Science Arrivals

Colton Branville – NADF Animal Care Technician
Jamie Chavez – Associate Lecturer, CNMT
Lindsey Cheever – Administrative Specialist, SHGS
Nicole Dahlman – Museum Operations Assistant
Tyler Firkus – Facilities Manager, NADF
Michelle Gullickson – Associate Lecturer, English
Carrie Hutton – Assistant to the Dean for Communications, COLS
Lisa Kennedy – Associate Lecturer, Math
Grant Kopitzke – Assistant Professor, Math
Rob Lowe – Associate Lecturer, History and International Studies
Mara Mergendahl, Teaching Specialist in Biology
Brian Moen – Associate Lecturer, Philosophy and Religious Studies
Josh Pietz – College Support Specialist, IT
Julie Trowbridge – Administrative Specialist, SBSS
Doug Urbina – Associate Lecturer, Math
Nataliia Vatolina – Fulbright Language Teaching Assistant, World Languages and Literatures
Cody Wanta – College Support Specialist, IT



NSF Grant Awarded to Bolster STEM

A \$1.5 million grant from the National Science Foundation will support first-year students who plan to major in biology, chemistry, or biochemistry and pursue graduate education or a career in a STEM field. The online [application](#) opened this month and UWSP students who qualify will have until Jan. 2, 2023 to apply.

The S-STEM award funds three cohorts of students and aims to increase STEM degree completion of low-income, high achieving undergraduate students with demonstrated financial need. The grant was secured thanks to the work of professors Erin Speetzen, Katie McGarry, and Sarah Orlofske. We are now recruiting ten S-STEM Scholars for the inaugural year of the program.

“This grant will allow us to expand our already strong undergraduate research and student support programs, broaden access to undergraduate research and help close opportunity gaps for low-income students in these majors,” said Erin Speetzen, professor of chemistry.

Beginning with the Fall 2023 semester, each scholar will be eligible for four years of support, a yearly scholarship of up to \$10,000 at UWSP. In addition to financial support, students will also receive academic, social, and career-development support through S-STEM.

WINTER COMMENCEMENT - DEC. 17, 2022

170 Undergraduate Candidates in COLS
Top 3 Majors: Biology, Psychology, Sociology

Message from the Dean

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



The 2022-2023 academic year is off to a great start, and we are approaching the end of a very productive fall semester!

This newsletter highlights a small sampling of the great work happening across the college due to the dedication of faculty, staff, students, and community partners. The launch of the Community Engagement Series and the continuing partnership with Skyward are just two examples of how that great work

on our campuses extends across our central Wisconsin region.

You can get a broader sense of achievements across the college by following our regular updates on social media. I am confident that the spring semester will only build on this gratifying fall semester!

Joshua Hagen



College of Letters and Science
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

Alumni Spotlight: Daniel Bondeson



UWSP Graduation: 2012

Degree: B.S. Chemistry

**Current Position: Research Scientist,
Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard**



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that may lead to targeted, effective new treatments for some of the deadliest diseases—ovarian and uterine cancer.

Alum Daniel Bondeson '12, chemistry, and his team at the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard aims to systematically identify and exploit cancer cell vulnerabilities in a project termed the Cancer Dependency Map. Their most recent research, published this year in the journal *Nature Cancer*, showed that ovarian and uterine cancers lose the ability to regulate phosphate levels when a protein called XPR1 is disabled. The result is often the death of the cancer cell, and the team is now trying to develop drugs that can turn off XPR1.

"It's an amazing privilege to be part of the team," said Bondeson.

Bondeson remembers the initial excitement and all the possibilities he started to imagine when he first began working in Professor Nate Bowling's organic chemistry

research lab. It's been 10 years since he left UWSP—where his father, the late Stephen Bondeson, worked as a professor of chemistry, and served in university administration. Stephen Bondeson facilitated the addition of the UWSP biochemistry major. When he retired in 2009, his son Daniel was just about to matriculate as a chemistry undergrad.

Bondeson said he initially expected to study pre-med and go to medical school but he was energized in Bowling's research lab. It gave him a solid foundation for scientific training.

"I'm grateful for how much I learned as an undergraduate," said Bondeson.

He said at UWSP he learned how to pursue a research question and how to run experiments, always encouraged to talk through his ideas with faculty. He gained invaluable hands-on research experience working with novel organic molecules. After studying a Yale biochemist for his senior capstone, Bondeson decided to go ahead and take the chance, applying to Yale University for his graduate studies.

"I fell in love with research. I wanted to help people with medicine but realized maybe the way I could impact a patient in healthcare is to do research," Bondeson said.

Community Engagement Series Spotlights Artificial Intelligence Topics

The college is mid-way through a series of presentations that examine the implications of "When Robots Rule the World," a themed community engagement series that features faculty lectures and film screenings. The series launched on Sept. 13 and continues through May 2 with a panel featuring UWSP professors, Vera Klekovkina, Tomi Heimonen, Cary Elza, Joshua Horn, Patrick Conley, and James Berry, at the DUC Theater at UW-Stevens Point.

So far we've hosted a lecture on the futuristic portrayal of robots in film, the daily use of artificial intelligence (A.I.) in mundane tasks and the latest advances in the field of human-centered A.I. and its implications.

The Portage County Public Library will continue to host free public presentations, also made available on livestream at uwsp.edu/whenrobotsrule.

Upcoming Topics (Portage County Public Library):

Feb. 21, 2023 "Perception of Humans and Robots"

March 7, 2023 "Robotics in Healthcare"

April 11, 2023 "Grammar, Accents, and Multilingualism of Robots"

Upcoming Films (DUC Theater):

Feb. 17, 2023 - Blade Runner 2049

April 21, 2023 - iHuman



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