

# SPOTLIGHT ON COFAC



College of Fine Arts & Communication  
University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point



## Winter 2024 Commencement

**Danny Mitchell**, 2006 BM Jazz Studies alumnus, was the commencement speaker at the UWSP Winter Commencement held on December 14, 2024. Mitchell has had great success performing as a keyboardist, bandleader, and vocalist for notable musicians worldwide and as musical director for Miranda Lambert for the past nine years. He has also composed, arranged, and produced his own albums. Danny is the creator of **Music on a Mission**, an annual holiday concert to raise funds for Stevens Point charities. During his recent trip, he also held an open Question and Answer session with students and community members where Danny shared that "After I left Stevens Point, I realized how special of a place this really is. I look back and think: man, being at UWSP was really great!"

[View the UWSP Commencement News Release](#)

You can also watch [Danny's commencement speech here](#) (he's at 30:57)



## 90FM-WWSP Wins Ten Awards at Wisconsin Broadcast Association Conference

Our student-run radio station, 90FM, recently won ten awards at the recent Wisconsin Broadcast Association (WBA) conference in Green Bay!



- **2nd Place**  
Boyd Huppert Excellence in Radio Writing Award - Derek Tritz
- **1st, 2nd, & 3rd Place**  
Best Feature Story - Derek Tritz & Owen Bessey
- **2nd Place** - Best Sports Play-by-Play - Liam Statz
- **1st and 3rd Place**  
Best Public Affairs/Talk Show - Derek Tritz & Owen Bessey
- **2nd Place** - Best Radio Promo - Brian Larson
- **2nd Place** - Best Social Media, TV and Radio - Montanna Heinz
- **2nd Place** - Best Website, TV and Radio - Montanna Heinz

While at the WBA conference, students networked with industry professionals on panels and in small discussions (including a UWSP alum working at ESPN who called out both 90FM and UWSP's Media Studies program while on stage), participated in a job fair featuring employers from across the state (at least three students had job offers in hand by the end of the day, others with leads for interviews), and numerous opportunities for additional professional development. Congratulations to all on being recognized as one of the best college media organizations in the state!

## Guest Artists/Speakers/Masterclasses This Winter

COFAC has been busy welcoming guests to work with our students already in 2025.

Some of our guests so far this semester include:

- Jeffrey Peterson** – Winona State University – Masterclass sessions with dance students and a performance of his original choreography titled "Side by Side" featuring 16 students.
- Christiane Noll** – Tony Award Nominated Broadway Actress. Held a masterclass with vocal students.
- Dr. Jason Alder** – World-Renowned Clarinet and Saxophonist – Taught masterclass and also held a public performance.
- Mafer Gugliemina**, Clarinet and Saxophonist, and **Joe Lecher**, Pianist – Taught a masterclass and also held a public performance.
- Michelle Grabner** – Guggenheim Fellow and Crown Family Professor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and **Brad Killam**, Professor at College of DuPage – Carlsten Gallery exhibit, student question and answer session, and gallery talks.
- Johannes Wallmann**, Jazz Piano and **Dennis Mitchell**, Saxophonist – Recording Artists – Taught a masterclass and also held a public performance.

We have more guests joining us through the end of the semester - check our [events calendar](#) for details on upcoming guests and performances.

## 2025 UWSP Jazz Festival

The 33rd annual Jazz Festival welcomed more than 500 students from 28 high schools to spend the day with our faculty, guest clinicians, and our special guests, the [Matt Wilson Group](#). After a day of study, practice, and masterclasses, these Jazz Ensemble and Jazz Combo students were invited to a public concert featuring our guest artists.



## UWSP Hosting the American College Dance Association Conference



The Dance Program at the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point is excited to host the 2025 [American College Dance Association \(ACDA\) North-Central Conference](#) from March 14-18! The conference theme, **Poetry in Motion**, aims to celebrate the broad range of dance in higher education while centering a connection between movement and words.

This year's conference is expected to welcome 400 participants and will be rich with live performances including four adjudication concerts, two informal concerts, a Gala Concert, and some special opportunities to share work created during the conference. They will also further the dialogue about dance in higher education with round table discussions on topics suggested by participants, mindful morning practices, and opportunities where all can belong and share.

Select works from the gala concert will be chosen by three adjudicators to perform at the ACDA National College Dance Festival, which will take place at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and George Washington University on May 2-4, 2025. Additionally, works selected for the National Festival will have the opportunity to be selected for the Jacob's Pillow Summer Dance Festival later in the summer.

## Swept Over the Rug - Michelle Grabner + Brad Killam



The Carlsten Gallery recently exhibited a visually arresting and wonderfully provocative installation. Bronze-leaved wash buckets to porcelain toilet paper rolls to Wisconsin landscape paintings.

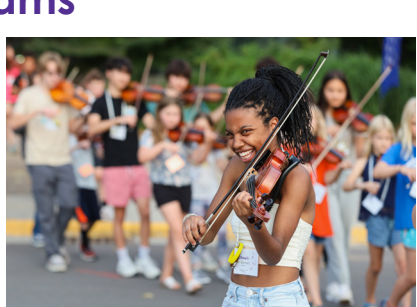
Michelle's tableau of custodial implements memorializes janitorial labor. A concept that emerged from her artist-in-residency experience at Kohler Co. Michelle transforms these elements in silverleaf, bronze, and porcelain in celebration of their design and use.

The unexpected juxtaposition of Brad's bucolic landscapes causes us to wonder about our own custodial practices and responsibilities in the world around us — and reflects the couple's shared life as dedicated artists, teachers, and parents.

Grabner's interplay between material experimentation and conceptual rigor is contrasted with Killam's enthusiasm for traditional genre painting and its histories. While their ongoing engagement with their daily environments may yield different approaches to artmaking, art as a lived experience is something they both value.

Michelle Grabner is a Guggenheim Fellow and Crown Family Professor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Brad is a professor at College of DuPage. These domestic partners have collaborated on artwork, curating, and publishing since the 1990s

## Upcoming Summer Programs



We're already thinking about summer in the COFAC! This year, we will again host many K-12 students during the [Point Music Camp](#), [Summer Dance Intensive](#), and [American Suzuki Institute](#). These summer programs give youth from across the United States the opportunity to participate in an immersive experience in the arts with our exceptional faculty and state-of-the-art Noel Fine Arts Center facilities.

## Day of Giving - May 6, 2025

Your donation to the COFAC Fund for Excellence during this year's Day of Giving will help students as they prepare to become trailblazers in the region and throughout the world under the mentorship of extraordinary faculty and long-standing, exceptional programs.

Gifts will help COFAC support students' dreams to succeed in their careers as all COFAC Fund for Excellence donations are used for student support through scholarship awards, enhanced learning environments, and opportunities to work closely with guest artists.

Our goal this spring is to raise \$10,000 and through the generosity of matching gift donors, we have \$5,000 in matching funds pledged already!

You don't have to wait until May 6 to make a Day of Giving donation. Visit the Day of Giving website [here](#) and make your gift today!



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View our events calendar at: [www.uwsp.edu/events](http://www.uwsp.edu/events) or [click here](#)

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Text UWSP to 715-447-7465 to join our  
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Pointer alumni news and events!



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