



Connections

Spring 2025

COLLEGE OF LETTERS AND SCIENCE

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Building Dedication Leads Off Research Symposium

Haeni Chemistry Biology Building Naming

In any given week, students are researching a host of projects using instrumentation in the Chemistry Biology Building. Impassioned to continue discoveries in the sciences, former teachers and UWSP alumni Frank and Kathleen Haeni, '70, have made their support for the university a priority.

The Haenis attended a building naming ceremony on May 2, 2025 where they received the Chancellor's Citation for Extraordinary Leadership and Exemplary Service to the University. Dean Joshua Hagen, College of Letters and Science, joined with Provost La Vonne Cornell-Swanson, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, in sharing the giving legacy of Frank and Kathie.



Their support funds numerous scholarships and research projects supporting students across the College of Natural Resources and the College of Letters and Science. They have also contributed funding for faculty-mentored undergraduate research, the Undergraduate Research Symposium and the Olson Museum of Natural History. Their most recent commitment established an endowment to fund laboratory repairs, equipment purchases, and maintenance. Going forward, the Fourth Avenue academic building opened as the Chemistry Biology Building will be named the Frank R. and Kathleen Y. Haeni Chemistry Biology Building.

The dedication was attended by university leaders, students, faculty, staff and family members of the Haenis. Frank and Kathie each addressed the audience and motivated students to fulfill their passions for knowledge.

After the naming event, the College celebrated the work of 160 students who presented work in oral presentations and poster sessions for the Undergraduate Research Symposium.

First Cohort Accepted to MSW Graduate Program

UW-Stevens Point looks to expand on the foundation of its strong undergraduate social work program with the addition of the online [Master of Social Work \(MSW\)](#) program. Students will choose an Advanced Generalist pathway, or specialty track that aligns most closely with their career goals. Options include clinical social work, medical social work, or school social work. There is also a pathway option for students outside of those specialty areas.

Faculty are enthusiastic to welcome the first students accepted this spring. The first cohort will be comprised of part-time students who do not already possess an undergraduate degree in social work. Future cohorts will include both full and part-time options, as well as opportunities for both students with and without an undergraduate social work degree.

Assistant Professor of Social Work Olivia Gerrish will direct the MSW field program coordinating with students who will be able to complete required field work right in their home community. The online nature of the program lends itself well to those who have not had the opportunity to continue their

education due to work, personal responsibilities or their location. The program aligns to workforce demand and will cater to both students coming directly out of an undergraduate social work program and those who have already been working in the field.



Olivia Gerrish, social work, joined UWSP as MSW Field Director.

"We are designing the program to meet students where they are today but also thinking about what they'll need down the road," said Gerrish. "We are doing it by building

on the incredible work social work educators have been doing for decades while taking their experience and combining it with some fresh ideas to create something really powerful."

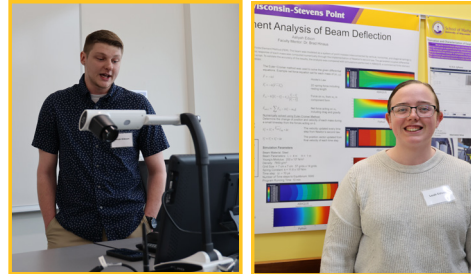
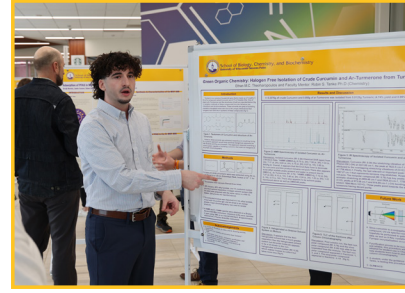
Graduates of the MSW program are eligible for employment in a wide range of fields including child welfare, youth justice, schools, mental health, substance use disorders, health care, aging, developmental disabilities, criminal justice and more.



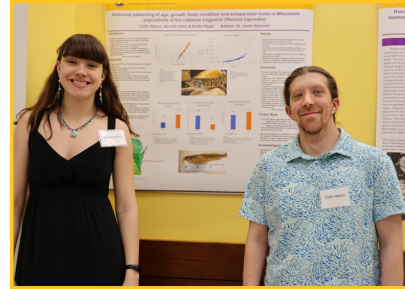
Inside

- Katz Faculty and University Awards
- Message from Dean Joshua Hagen
- Students Collaborate in Public History Project

DISCOVER YOUR PURPOSE



Students presented oral and poster research projects in the 26th Annual Undergraduate Research Symposium on May 2, 2025.
[View album here.](#)



Course Collaboration Supports Historic Park

Students get Hands-On Public History Collaboration

A student capstone project launched this semester will breathe new life into one of Portage County's historical gems. The small but determined staff of the Portage County Historical Society (PCHS) has had the goal of opening Heritage Park in Plover to wider use and providing visitors with deeper awareness of its historical significance.

Through this unique collaboration across three academic disciplines at UW-Stevens Point, students in Forest Recreation Planning and Site Design, Interpretive Media, and History are playing their respective roles in a long-term plan to make Heritage Park a regional attraction. The PCHS acquired structures decades ago on a site located near the Boys and Girls Club and other community spaces.

In the coming months, historical narratives curated from written records, newspapers and photographs will help tell stories long forgotten.

Assistant Professor of History Cory Haala said his students in the Seminar in Public History have finished their drafts detailing the history of eight buildings now located at Heritage Park, one a post office turned bar! Students weighed how best to approach the information and how the future visitors will respond to the material.

"It has a tangible public research outcome and it's exciting for me as an instructor not just for campus, but that chance to give back to the community," Haala said. "My students are getting high level historical research and translating that into real world historical skills by working for a stakeholder."

The project is exactly the type of resume-building work that students can use for growth in their career path. They are getting hands on with some delicate records, some in deteriorating condition, to delve into research that makes a difference in their community.

"From binders of information they are pulling the history together in a narrative and learning, not everything that shows up in research, needs to be included," said Cheyenne Antell, Portage County Historical Society curator of collections and exhibits.

PCHS had previously partnered with students in the History Lab on campus. They provided records and students have catalogued documents and artifacts in order to make them accessible to the general public in the archives. To date that work has produced about a half a million historical primary source archival materials.

As five student groups pitched their final presentations on their park design recommendations for stakeholders, all of them noted how interesting it had been to have a role in the future of Heritage Park. How they envisioned future visitors would be better able to enjoy the park's physical spaces and connect to its history through the collaboration.

Their proposals aim to not only improve the park's physical space, but to deepen the stories it tells and the connections it fosters.



Students representing three UWSP courses toured the historical structures to document and develop site plans for Heritage Park in Plover.

2025 AWARDS

Distinguished Faculty and University Awards

The UWSP University Awards recognized six COLS faculty and staff members for their contributions at the April 23, 2025 ceremony.

Awardees are:

University Excellence in Teaching, Scholarship, and Service

- Professor Brian Barringer (Biology)



University Excellence in Teaching Award

- Professor Nate Bowling (Chemistry and Biochemistry)
- Assistant Professor Margaret Kubek (Sociology and Social Work)
- Assistant Professor Sean Mooney-Leber (Psychology)

University Scholar Award

- Professor Joshua Horn (Philosophy and Religious Studies)

University Spirit of Service Award

- Amanda Gilman (University Advancement)

Eugene Katz 2025 Recipient - Andy Felt

In 25 years at UW-Stevens Point, Professor Andy Felt has maintained an impressive and ongoing record of excellence. His goal in classes is to motivate the students by connecting the skills they learn to real life situations where the skills can be used. Professor Felt helped develop Mathematics for the Information Sciences, Math 209 and created the writing emphasis for Math 315, Operations Research II. Andy leads the Center for Athletic Scheduling as director. Students use mathematical programming to create conference schedules for NCAA Division III conferences around the country. For the 2023 academic year, Felt secured a Polish-U.S. Fulbright Commission grant to teach Introductory Modeling and Project/ Problem Based Learning in the Applied Physics and Mathematics Department of Gdańsk University of Technology in Poland.



Dean Joshua Hagen, right, presents the Eugene Katz Distinguished Faculty Award to Professor of Mathematics Andy Felt, left, at the COLS Spring College Meeting on May 8, 2025.

Dean's Message

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

As we close out another academic year, I am again truly impressed by the accomplishments of students, faculty, and staff from across the college. This newsletter provides a small snapshot of those achievements across teaching, research, and service to our communities and state. The year has held some challenges, including the pleasant surprise of a larger than anticipated incoming freshmen class last fall, but we can take pride in how the college pulled together to meet those challenges.

You have my deepest thanks and appreciation for your hard work and contributions. I look forward to seeing you in the fall, but until then, have a great summer!



Joshua Hagen



College of Letters and Science
University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point

Spring Commencement By the Numbers

The UW-Stevens Point Spring Commencement recognized over 1,200 students in the Class of 2025. The ceremony was held May 17, 2025 at the Skyward Fieldhouse. Graduates in the College of Letters and Science included:

- 206 Bachelor of Science Degrees
- 47 Bachelor of Arts Degrees
- 27 Associate Degrees
- 1 Master of Science in Data Science

Earning Highest GPA Honors:

- Summa Cum Laude 22
- Magna Cum Laude 33
- Cum Laude 53



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amanda.gilman@uwsp.edu | 715-346-2299
Thank you for your consideration!



COLS Community Series to Explore Cannabis Topics

The College of Letters and Science Community Engagement Series for 2025-2026 will invite participants to engage in timely conversations about cannabis cultivation, regulation, public health, and its evolving role in Wisconsin and beyond.

Faculty in the Department of Biology will organize and present, "Cannabis: Science, History, Uses, and Controversies." Topics will include the complex history of cannabis, its recreational, medical, and industrial uses, and the social and legal controversies that continue to shape public discourse. As one of the world's oldest cultivated plants, cannabis offers a rich lens through which to examine issues of science, policy, and culture.

The series will feature several events each semester, all open to the public, designed to foster meaningful dialogue among students, faculty, staff, and community members. Details will be announced by late summer.

Retirements

Spring 2024

Katherine Kaster - Computing and New Media Technologies

Lynn Kordus - Professor, Department of English

Justin Rueb - Professor, Department of Psychology

Alec Toumi - Professor, Department of World Languages and Literatures

Lisa Yolitz - Northern Aquaculture Demonstration Facility

Pete Zani - Associate Professor, Department of Biology

Summer 2025

Eric Larson - Professor, Department of Geography and Geology

Social Media

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