

UB Knightlines

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Danny Glover
Speaks on the
Continuity of
Education

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President's Line

As the comparatively new president of the University of Bridgeport, I am excited to report that enrollment is rising again and that we look to turn the page on a new chapter. There have been many changes, from new sports to new teaching methods, but the most important things have not changed. We are, and will always remain, UB.

One of those steady rocks is this magazine. Inside this rejuvenated issue of *Knightlines*, you'll find stories of exploration, of perseverance, and of service to the community. Service is something that I have been proud to both preach and practice in my years at Goodwin University and now as the president of the University of Bridgeport. The group of people we have assembled is dedicated to the place this campus exists in, and the stories of our outreach, whether to our local veterans or to a village in Costa Rica, reflect our dedication to the larger community.

Some of my favorite stories in this issue are the stories of alums who have come back to serve UB in other capacities: as coaches, teachers, and donors. They are providing service that will mean not only a secure future for our students, but also a sense of continuity with our past. I feel a sense of pride knowing that I am now part of a long line of people whose duty and responsibility to this university stretches back nearly a century.

Continuity. Community. Don't those words really mean the same thing? Over the past two years I have learned so much about the wonderful accomplishments of our students, faculty, and alums and I look forward to being a part of this wonderful place for years to come.



Danielle Wilken
President



UB Knightlines

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President
Danielle Wilken, EdD

Vice President of
Innovation, Strategy
and Advancement/
Publisher
Elena Cahill, JD

Editor/Lead Writer
Eric D. Lehman

Design
Matthew Freeman

Photographers
Dru Martin
Jonah Dejarnette

Contributing Writers
Jhanay Abrams
Alexa Bottoni
Donna Oropall
Steven Rashba
Chuck Sadowski

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Michon White-Bernard

MAIL
Please send address
changes and letters to the
Editor to: UB Knightlines,
126 Park Avenue, Bridgeport,
CT 06604 or by email to
knightlines@bridgeport.edu.
Please include your full name,
UB class year (if applicable),
and contact information. For
additional assistance, call
(203) 576-2433.

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ON THE COVER
Actor and humanitarian
Danny Glover speaks to
UB's 2022 commencement
ceremonies



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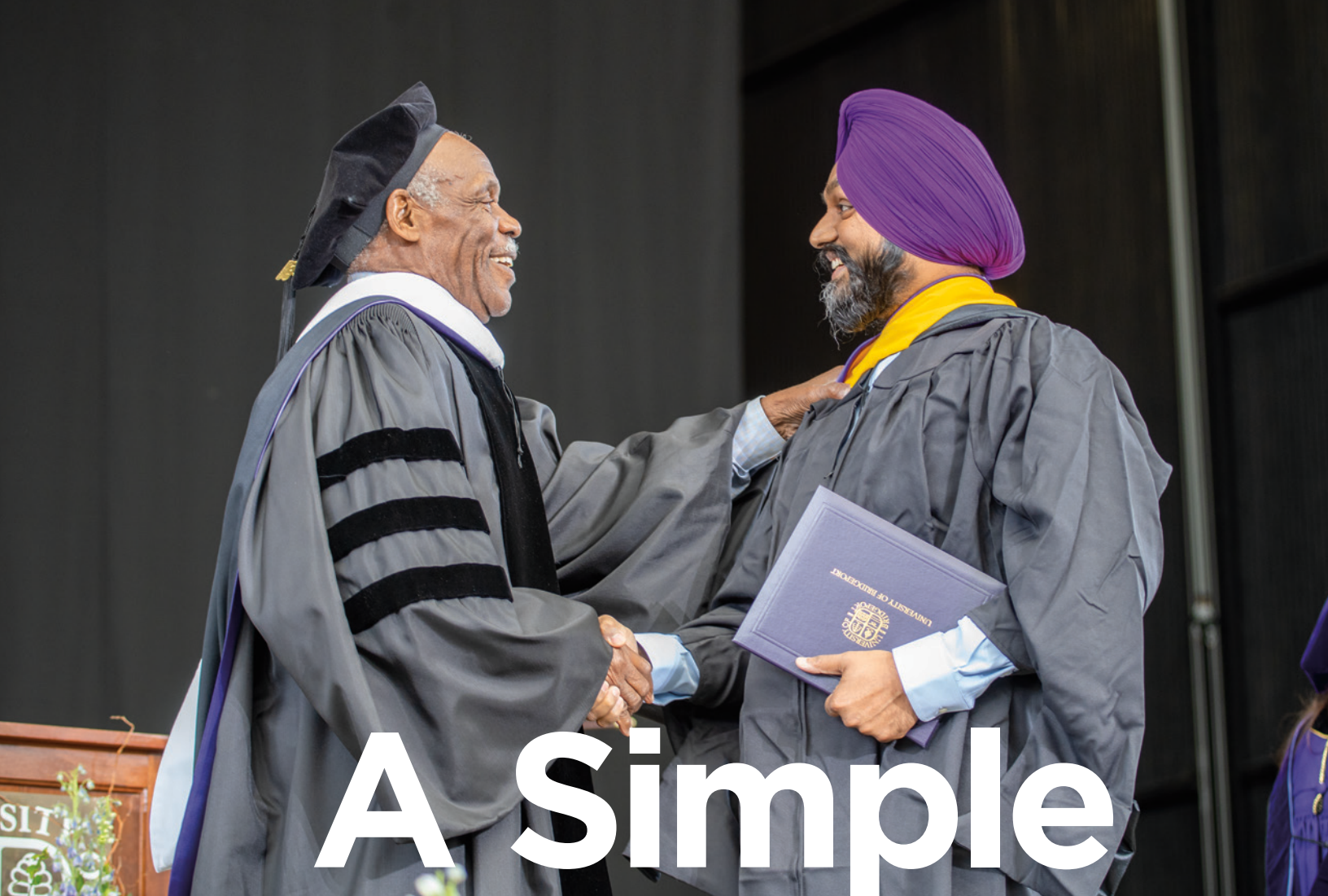
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A Simple Equation

Danny Glover Speaks to UB Graduates about the Continuity of Education

On May 1, 2022, the cherry trees were blooming under a blue, cloudless sky as students lined up to enter the Hartford HealthCare Amphitheater in Bridgeport. The white dome of the awning filtered the brilliant morning sun, lighting hundreds of bouquets of roses, hydrangeas, snapdragons, and astromelias that graced the stage. The stands filled with family and friends, waiting for the graduates, stage party, and invited speaker Danny Glover to enter the stadium.

Graduation is always a special day, but this occasion was even more extraordinary, as the world began to recover from a deadly pandemic and the University of Bridgeport began its own new chapter. "It's very exciting what's happening with the university," said Professor Meg Zayan, UB's Community Health Education Coordinator. "It's a privilege to be part of the continuity of scholars over time." That continuity was on full display as the faculty, staff, and alums gathered in the hallways under the stands to confer 663 undergraduate degrees and 743 graduate degrees on the eager students.



"It's the best day of the year," said President Danielle Wilken. "This is why we come to work every day, to celebrate the students and their dreams." Gordon Stier ('77), the Vice President of the Alumni Association, agreed wholeheartedly. "I'm optimistic and excited about the future," he said. "Now is the time for implementation." But Golden Knight Carol Soboleski might have been the most excited of anyone. "I've been waiting for this day since I graduated here in 1972," she said. "That's a long time."

Many of the students had decorated their mortarboards with purple feathers and glitter, along with slogans like "Earned not Given" and "I'm There." Soccer player Yasmidt Mendoza decorated hers with flowers and gears and a note that read: "I'm not a princess, I'm a mechanical engineer." Psychology major Ricardo Jimenez said that the day helped remind him that hard work pays off. "Even if you are in a period of stress and hopelessness," he said, "there is

something waiting for you." Fellow Psychology major David Diah was more direct about his own stress, saying, "After four years it's finally over and I get to sleep."

Not everyone who was graduating was leaving UB. "It's surreal that I'm graduating," said Danielle Ide, a Human Services and Psychology major, who is starting the M.A. in Counseling program in the fall. "I will still be here and am excited to start all over again."

Softball pitcher and dental hygiene major Kaite Burawski was receiving her Associates degree but will be returning to pitch two more seasons and finish her B.S. degree. "UB has been good to me," she said. "I feel a lot of pride."

Just after 10 a.m., students entered the amphitheater, waving and smiling, to the resounding cheers of their parents, friends, and faculty. The stage party gathered amongst the flowers under the UB flags with symbols that represented the lamp of learning, the tree of life, the Perry Arch, and the seascape of Long Island Sound. As everyone was seated, Grand Marshall Susan Ferency announced the ceremony's beginning.

After Professor Mya Scarlato led a special rendition of the national anthem, President Danielle Wilken spoke to the assembled crowd. She referenced the struggles of the pandemic, praising the students' resilience. "You thrived," she said. "You learned to dance in the rain." But she pointed



“You’ve earned degrees, knowledge, and skills,” she said. “What will you do to make the world a better place? How will you be part of the solution?”

out their quest was not over. “You’ve earned degrees, knowledge, and skills,” she said. “What will you do to make the world a better place? How will you be part of the solution?”

Wilken acknowledged the faculty, family and friends of the graduates, and then the Golden Knights, who had graduated fifty years earlier. Next, Ann Clark, Chair of the Board of Trustees, took the podium, followed by Mayor Joseph Ganim ('83), who lauded the university's partnership with the city of Bridgeport. Then Senator Richard Blumenthal offered his congratulations on the “beautiful spring occasion,” mentioning how teachers have been on the front lines with health care workers and others during the difficult times of the pandemic. He also thanked the president of Goodwin University Mark Scheinberg and spoke about how all of us received help from the people of the past and urged the students to be role models for others in the future.

Zaria Rawls, receiving her B.S. in Health Sciences, was the undergraduate speaker, calling back to her 2018 orientation, where incoming students all sang “UB, do you love me?” She noted the changes brought by the pandemic since then, from online classes to protective masks. “Through all of those changes, we persevered,” she said. “Today on the first day of May 2022, we are here, we are graduating, we made it.”

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Manyul Im acknowledged members of the stage party and formally welcomed legendary actor and humanitarian Danny Glover to the proceedings. “Mr. Glover is an American treasure,” he said, citing his work in education, theater, and film, as well as his activism for positive change. “He embodies the spirit of service to community and the world, to which UB is also deeply committed.”

President Wilken and Trustee Chair Ann Clark conferred the Doctor of Humane Letters degree on Danny Glover, who then took his place at the podium. Standing tall in the brisk wind, he spoke of the importance of education, of the continuity of “this incredible journey that I’ve been able to be a part of.” He talked about his mother, the first member of her family to graduate from college, 80 years ago. “She was always grateful that she didn’t have to pick cotton in September, she went to school.” He then talked about how her courage shaped who he is today. “She would be proud to know that her son was with you today in this moment.” The passing Metro North train punctuated his words with a whistle and the flags of the University of Bridgeport, Connecticut, and the United States waved in the breeze.

“Some of you will continue your work as students, some of you will go into the world,” he said confidently, his voice getting stronger with each word. “You will begin to unravel this mystery of how we become better human beings and stewards of the planet.” He paused for a moment, enjoying the silence. “Thank you for the chance to watch another generation move forward.”

Despite the brisk wind, Glover then proceeded to shake hands with every excited student who crossed the stage. Many danced and took selfies with the celebrated actor. “He made every student feel special,” said student Justin Hafele. “It was a great honor to meet Danny Glover.” “It was awesome,” agreed Craig Leonard. “I told him I was a huge fan and he immediately hugged me.”

Provost Im presented the graduates to President Wilken, who officially conferred the degrees, and Alumni Association president William Moran ('74) welcomed them as alums. “The future is bright,” he said. “Congratulations, Class of 2022. Be engaged and be involved.” President Wilken echoed his remarks. “Let that sink in. You are no longer UB students, you are now UB alumni.”

But as the undergraduate students happily joined their families, everyone at the amphitheater got ready for another ceremony. The sky remained a brilliant shade of blue and the breezy air warmed and stilled. At 2 p.m. the graduate students walked out into the bright sunshine for their own special moment.

While receiving her Physician Assistant M.S. degree, Brianna Wall took the podium as the student speaker for the graduate ceremony. “As you enter into your chosen careers as well as the unknown journey of life, hold with you the lessons you learned throughout the last few years and keep this community close,” Walls said. “It is because of the people sitting here in this stadium, surrounding you today, that you became the person you are.”

At this second ceremony, Danny Glover gave an entirely different speech, telling students about his friend Robert Parris Moses, the organizer of the 1964 Freedom Summer and founder of the Algebra Project, a math literacy program for disadvantaged students. He had first met Moses during his senior year in high school when he was recruiting students for the Freedom Summer and later, they became friends. This was another link in the chain of continuity, another person who passed down knowledge and character to Glover, who now had the chance to pass it on again. “I’m proud to be here as you take the next step in your own growth and careers,” he told the students.

It is no accident that everyone who spoke at the University of Bridgeport’s 2022 Commencement focused on the unity created by education and its endurance throughout the years. It’s a simple equation. Continuity equals community over time. And for the University of Bridgeport, that is more than algebra, that is everything. ■



Danny Glover: Actor, Activist, Humanitarian

Danny Glover is an award-winning actor, producer and humanitarian with a performance career that spans more than 30 years. From the blockbuster *Lethal Weapon* franchise in film, to hit television shows such as *ER*, Glover has portrayed a myriad of popular roles and has distinguished himself as one of his generation’s most consummate actors. Glover’s performances in such classic motion pictures as *The Color Purple*, *Witness*, and *Places in the Heart*, have not only showcased his talent and versatility but have also brought him critical and audience acclaim. Honored with Awards from the NAACP, BET and SAG, Glover has also received several Emmy nominations for his work in such television hits as *Lonesome Dove*.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences awarded him this year’s Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award for his life-long philanthropy and advocacy for economic justice and access to healthcare and education. Mr. Glover is a UNICEF Ambassador and served as Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations Development Program from 1998 to 2004.



Faculty Research Day

Helps Build the University of Our Dreams

On the morning of April 1, 2022, groups of excited students, staff, and faculty began to gather on the steps of the John J. Cox Student Center, and as the doors opened, they rushed inside to take their name tags and greet each other over coffee and tea. It was the first big live event since the pandemic had started, and the building-maximum of 250 people had signed up to participate. But it was not a concert or a celebrity lecture that they had come to see. It was Faculty Research Day, one of the University of Bridgeport's signature events for the past 11 years, a chance for everyone in the community to showcase their scholarly work.

This day-long event in the halls of the Student Center brought together an array of faculty, undergraduate, and graduate students from UB and Goodwin University, along with students from five area high schools, to share their research in different fields.

"This is an opportunity for faculty and students across programs to show their work and build relationships," said faculty senate president Dr. Kevin Kelliher. "Even though we're sometimes only a building away, our research can be a mystery. This day is the solution." Dental Hygiene Professor Wendy Garcia agreed. "It is a door to the future," she declared.

By 9 a.m., the crowd had assembled around tables in the social room of the Student Center, chatting excitedly about the day to come. The Dean of the College of Engineering, Business, and Education and Associate Vice President for Graduate Studies and Research Dr. Khaled Elleithy opened the ceremonies, noting that 2019 was the last time UB hosted a live faculty research day. It had been canceled in 2020 during the first wave of COVID and had been fully online in 2021.

Dr. Khaled Elleithy
welcoming everyone to
Faculty Research Day

“We are extremely happy to welcome everyone in person to our first big event since the pandemic,” Dr. Elleithy remarked. “It is a trademark of our university.” He referenced the 1,000 attempts that inventor Thomas Edison took to get the lightbulb to work, hoping that the researchers in the room would not have quite so much trouble.

Elleithy continued by saying that this day was part of the career-focused mission of the university, “developing a world-class workforce that is essential to the continued growth of industries and communities in Bridgeport, Connecticut, the United States, and the world.” He was followed by Provost Manyul Im and President Danielle Wilken, who spoke about the way that knowledge builds on itself. “Sharing what you learned with the rest of the world is scholarship at its best,” President Wilken said. “We will leave here better, more knowledgeable, and stronger.”

After these opening remarks, students, faculty, and guests browsed through the Student Center’s collection on 118 authored posters, gathering around ones that interested them and questioning the researchers. Posters with illustrations, photographs, and eye-grabbing titles ranged from “The Impact of Blockchain and Algorithm on Financial Technology” to a recipe for “Smart Doorknob Cleanser.” And it was not all science and business. Prof. Randy Laist focused his poster on zombie fiction’s effects of political discourse. “Imaginative literature gives us a window into the future,” he said to the fascinated students and faculty gathered around. “Literature and film are always at the cusp of human evolution.”

There were tables with the records of recent successes – companies founded by UB graduates that range from Tele-meeting Software, IRL Innovations, and Aircoach, among many others. There were studies, like one on the impacts of Asian shore crabs on other species in Long Island Sound. And there were practical inventions, like a mobile app to help oral immunotherapy users track their symptoms, incidence of allergic reactions, and progress. Scholars of all ages focused on cryptocurrency, pharmaceuticals, banking, and teaching methods.

“This is my favorite day of the year,” said VP of Innovation, Strategy, and Advancement Elena Cahill. “It is what UB is all about.” But what did she mean? What did all this add up to? Why bring it all together? Physics professor Dr. Maria Gherasimova had an answer. “Faculty Research Day is important because there is a lot going on at the university,” she said. “Today facilitates discussion and collaboration on further projects.”

At 11 a.m. the keynote speaker took the stage in the social room. Dr. Chong Qiu, Associate Professor and Buckman Endorsed Professor, Dept. of Chemistry and Chemical Bioengineering at the University of New Haven, gave a presentation called “What is up in the Air: Potential Impacts of Trace Ambient Components on Environment and Climate.” “My whole topic is what we breathe in and out,” said Dr. Qiu. “What trace elements are in the air that we don’t need, like ozone and ammonia.” He demonstrated



Faculty and students enjoying the first major live event at UB since the pandemic

how ozone levels exceeded the standards in Connecticut, on many days of the year. He then described different methods to

monitor these elements, from the very expensive to the slightly cheaper, without losing quality.

“One of the best things about today is the conversation that starts to happen between disciplines,” said Dean of the College of Science and Society, Dr. Kathleen Engelmann, who has mentored many students to victory in the event over the years. “Our keynote speaker captured that in his presentation and our students have shown their disciplinary and cross-disciplinary work.”

While the high school students and teachers toured the campus and ate lunch at Marina Hall, judges from Sacred Heart University, Samford University, and Columbia University convened to decide the Faculty Competitive Category winners. For the student posters in the high school, undergraduate, graduate and doctoral categories, UB and Goodwin faculty along with current doctoral candidates and UB alumni entered their scores into the online judging app. The rest of the FRD attendees conversed with Student Entrepreneur Center (SEC) students showcasing their businesses. Thea Marx, Doctoral Candidate, Naturopathic Medicine, displayed her innovative pre- and post-surgical supplement line, Enolda Joseph, a graduate student in the School of Business, displayed her vegan skincare line, and Nicholette Goodin, a graduate student in the School of Education, displayed her skincare and candle line. Attendees voted on the business they would invest in and the winner – Enolda Joseph – was announced later that afternoon.

The afternoon’s program included presentations from Director of Grants, Maria Gomes; Prof. Liane Leedom, M.D.; Hannah Halloran, MSW; and Mechanical Engineering undergraduate Nhat Pham. EdD candidate Michael Pompano also presented his dissertation research, “Development and Psychometric Validation of an Instrument to Measure Teacher Self-Efficacy for Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments.”

Director of the Bauer Hall Innovation Center Sherri Dente also highlighted student successes by featuring



Faculty winner Mya Scarlato talks about her topic with Director of Libraries Scott Hughes

“Every dream is coming true,” she said. “We’ll probably be doing a clinical trial by

the end of the year.” Not content with this one product, she will next test an herbal remedy for skin conditions that she pioneered at her alpaca sanctuary, Bella Alpacas.

Before the announcement of the poster winners, Julie Demers took the stage. As FRD’s Co-Chair, the success of the event had been mostly due to her hard work, but instead of taking a bow, she humbly announced raffle prize winners. According to Demers, “The six months

three students who had recently received funding for their businesses. Clovia McIntosh, who graduated from UB in 2007 and returned to enroll in the MBA program, presented TuBee, designed to prevent children from falling in bathtubs. When she found out that an astonishing 120 children were sent to the ER daily, she realized there was a need for protection, and now has a prototype in production. Then, MBA student Necas Collins introduced his two companies, BLACC Bottle and MooLA Investment Group. “It’s whether or not you show up and tap into the resources UB offers,” he spoke directly to the assembled high school students. “Tap in and leverage the resources that are available.”

For the final success story, Judy Apicella stepped up to the podium, waving away the power point screen above her, telling us her story in clear, expressive language. Now a graduate student in the Nutrition Institute, she spent 13 years as an herbalist before attending UB. Her research journey began when her husband contracted Lyme disease and suffered from severe pain and brain fog. An herbal remedy she mixed helped him with all the symptoms. Over the next few years, that remedy helped 65 more people. Additionally, Apicella helped a number of dogs who suffered from Lyme, including her own, by making her herbal remedy into a tea.

UB helped take her product to the next level. “When I started in the Nutrition program, I learned about things like metabolic pathways, and how to get my remedy lab-tested,” she said. After several submissions to UB’s Institutional Review Board and local testing labs, she sought FDA approval. She got help throughout this long process from Grant and Project Support Coordinator Julie Demers, from Dr. Stephen Jackowicz in the College of Health Sciences, and from Elena Cahill and Sherri Dente in the Entrepreneur Center. “You don’t even need a complete idea or product, like I had,” she said. “The support between the students and the staff is amazing because they help you refine your ideas.”

As a result of these efforts, Apicella received a 2021 CT Next Innovation Grant. Part of the funding was used by UB’s chemistry lab, under Dr. Abu Hossion’s guidance, to conduct high-performance liquid chromatography analysis of the product. Entrepreneur Center mentor Mike Roer helped by selling her product at his store in downtown Bridgeport.

of event planning by the FRD committee, as well as all the FRD volunteers pitching in to help in the days leading up to the event, is what made the day possible.” The selection of interesting prizes was donated by Café AsoProLa Altamira, Bella Alpacas and Home Harvested Herbals, BLACC Bottle, UB Clinics, UB’s Admissions Office, the FRD Committee and Angie’s at Aqua: The Seafood Market at the Aquaculture School. Loud cheers erupted as members of each of the constituencies won and collected their treasures.

Finally, as the busy day wound to a close, Mark Scheinberg made remarks on behalf of Goodwin University, saying that “the leadership role you are taking in this work is inspiring.” Then, Dr. Elleithy presented awards to the honorable mentions and winners in the High School, Undergraduate, Graduate, Doctoral, and Faculty Competitive categories. Honorees received UB Bookstore gift cards, courtesy of President Danielle Wilken’s Office, or a cash prize generously donated by our sponsors, CT Next, Pullman & Comley, and Young America Capital (whose managing partner, Peter Formenk, is a double-degree UB alumnus in Finance).

Judy Apicella’s poster, “Research of the Obstacles in the Treatment of Chronic Lyme Symptoms and the use of the Herbal Formula Phoenix Rising to Aid in Chronic Fatigue, Pain and Brain Fog in this Population,” won an honorable mention in the graduate category. Music professor Mya Scarlato won the faculty competitive category for her poster, “This is Going to be a Learning Curve, Especially Because You’re White: Becoming an Anti-racist Music Teacher in a Majority Indigenous Classroom.” “I’m honored to be part of Faculty Research Day and be a part of this conversation with my colleagues,” said Scarlato. “I was so impressed with the students that presented here today. It is great to talk together about all the subjects we are passionate about.”

Dr. Elleithy then invited attendees to a reception which was generously sponsored by CisLunar Aerospace Inc. and Pepsico. As faculty and students feasted on cheese and crackers, the conversation continued, and for those who stayed for the dishes and dances of the 44th annual International Festival that evening, it went on long into the night. That conversation is what makes a university, and a culture, healthy and strong. ■



Health Sciences Students Find **Perspective** and **Purpose** in Costa Rica

After leaving San Jose and crossing the 11,322-foot Cerro de la Muerte Pass, the bus zig-zagged down the steep red road, cornering by sheer drop-offs, knocking small stones down into the abyss. Ahead, the cloud forests of Costa Rica's La Amistad National Park hummed with the sound of insects, sharp calls of monkeys and birds punctuating the mist. After a seven-hour drive, the 20 students and 3 professors from the University of Bridgeport finally arrived in Biolley. Pre-nursing student Jessica Maria Silva stepped out of the bus with her classmates and into the open-air community room. The coffee and cocoa farmers of Asoprola welcomed them with huge plates of chicken, vegetables, and fruits, brought straight from the land to the table.

Silva only recently started her college career at UB in 2020, but after she became an orientation leader in Summer 2021, she was approached by Prof. Tim Raynor and asked to join the expedition. She was inspired both by her international management class and her Colombian and Brazilian heritage to say yes. "It was life-changing," she said. "It was a humbling experience."

“We’re not there to ‘save’ them; we are there to learn from each other.”

From February 25 to March 3, Silva and the other students worked in the coffee fields as part of the community, learning how the villagers farmed, how they roasted coffee, raised tilapia, and dried cacao beans. “We dropped our culture, came in with a blank slate,” she said. “We were immersed in their way of life.”

Business students from UB have been going to this small village for six years, guided by Professors Tim Raynor and Elena Cahill. (see *Knightlines* Summer 2017) On that first expedition, they visited a coffee factory and learned how to package it, worked through the order fulfillment, and had brainstorming meetings to improve the business. Raynor and Cahill worked with students to develop survey instruments, collecting data on education, healthcare, economics, and infrastructure.

The president of the non-profit co-op, Yendry Suarez, asked them to write her a business plan because their government was offering a grant to buy a coffee roaster. It was something Tim Raynor knew about, having previously owned a coffee company of his own. Prof. Cahill had experience with entrepreneurship and writing business proposals. The students researched the grant, analyzed the market, and made the deadline.

Unfortunately, the government of Costa Rica rejected this plan, so they switched gears and tried a GoFundMe campaign, as well as bringing it to Rotary International for funding. Several Rotaries in Fairfield County and Costa Rica raised \$15,000, added to \$8,000 from the GoFundMe. They interviewed a coffee roaster manufacturer, wired money, and delivered the roaster to Asoprola.

Since then, Suarez and the Asoprola Association have

increased both the eco-tourism and the coffee business. The farmers dry the beans together on concrete tables, extracting the coffee beans and putting them into burlap sacks. Previously, they sent all those beans to San Jose and commodity brokers reaped the rewards. Now, they make their own brand, Café Cerro Biolley, which allows them to keep more of the profits.

Since UB started the annual project, dental hygiene students joined the expeditions, and this year nursing joined, too, all fulfilling internships for their majors. Half of the students going this year spoke Spanish, but for all of them it was immersive, project-based learning. “We are guests in a community and this is a collaborative model for education,” said Raynor, who has returned 10 times to Asaprola. “We’re not there to ‘save’ them; we are there to learn from each other.”

Dental Hygiene Professor Laura Greco joined these expeditions in 2018 with her dental hygiene students. Their internship is designed to expand their understanding of their field beyond the clinic, and during the trip

they gave presentations on oral health, well-being, medical health, and access to care. The villagers’ ability to leave their work and travel six hours to get help is limited, so the students gain an understanding how health care works in a rural community. “People there have to make sacrifices in money and time to get care,” said Greco. “But they have cellphones, they are connected to the world; this is not a charity, it is a collaboration.”

The community itself is led by Yendry Suarez, the president of the co-op, and one of her sustainability goals is to make sure that leaders know emergency care like CPR. Greco loved that women play such prominent roles in the



community. “We try to become part of their community, their life, as best we can,” she said. “Sharing all our backgrounds benefits us all.”

The dental hygiene students visited a rural school, gathering in smaller groups due to the pandemic. They taught the children nutrition and oral health alongside the school’s teachers. “Seeing the UB students lead presentations is my favorite part,” said Greco. “And working with my colleagues and students together to better the community.” But she also liked that she had made friends in the village after so many years. “One little girl pulled down her mask and waved. She remembered me,” she continued fondly. “That meant a lot.”

For the dental hygiene students, it was both exciting and eye-opening. “It was really fun,” said Meadow Yvon (’23). “It was a lot different than being in clinic and really put things in perspective.” Yvon is originally from Vermont, and no stranger to the rural lifestyle. Nevertheless, the experience was new in many ways. One day she and the other dental hygiene students visited a local community center to show adults and children proper brushing and flossing techniques. They talked to families about the importance of nutrition and answered questions about any oral health concerns they had. “Not knowing the language was hard,” said Yvon. “There were three dental hygiene students who spoke Spanish and three that did not, so we paired up.”

She also appreciated having an opportunity to learn from the business and nursing students. “It was interesting to hang out with UB students in different disciplines,” she said. “We learned about the business side of the coffee industry, learned about how health and oral health impacts business, and how it affects peoples’ lives.”

Former emergency room nurse and Assistant Professor Erika Parris agreed that the interdepartmental exchange had been a fruitful aspect of the trip. “Our students really bonded,” she said. “It opened our lives to another culture, but also to ourselves.” It was her first time in Costa Rica, and the first time for all the nursing students. One of

those students, Claudia Matamoros (’22) is originally from Ecuador and works at the VA hospital while at UB on a scholarship. She travels often but had not been to Central America.

“It was a great opportunity to do what I love in another culture, but also learn from them,” Matamoros said. “Just learning about who they are and telling them how we do things, maybe it would help them.” She gave a presentation on systemic health and blood pressure to the farmers, as part of two days of community teaching, along with several days of other community service. But many of the topics were provided by the local community, like the proper procedure for a machete accident while out in the fields.

Matamoros wants to open her own practice, maybe a small clinic, and this experience gave her more inspiration to do that. “This is me,” she said simply. Professor Parris agreed. “It was life-changing for some of the students, and for me.” Parris plans to take her own family back to Asaprola this summer to give her own children the experience her students had. “You think you will make an impact on their lives,” she said. “But they end up making an impact on yours.”

In that way, the annual UB expedition to Costa Rica is so much bigger than education itself. “I think one of the biggest things that resonated with me was how important community is,” said nursing student Shannon Stone (’22). “We went from being strangers with each other, to growing a loving and nurturing

community with one another. In a short period of time, we learned to trust each other, problem solve together, and look out for one another.”

Over the past few years, the importance of good health care has become an unavoidable fact, and the UB students all said they found new purpose in their health care careers while visiting Costa Rica. But they found something else, too, maybe just as important. “This trip emphasized the importance of slowing down, embracing the present moment, and living intentionally,” Stone continued. “I hope to carry these values with me as I continue my journey into my professional career.” ■



Jessica Silva and a new friend

Leaders

Creating Leaders

Bauer Hall Innovation Center Builds the Next Generation

One Friday in April, the elegant corridors of Bauer Hall buzzed with the sounds of students meeting mentors, students preparing for pitch competitions, and students gathering for a weekly Lunch and Learn. It was just one busy day in a busy year for this building and all those within it.

Made possible by a gift from George and Carol Bauer, the 9,600-square-foot building serves as an economic incubator for entrepreneurship and innovation for UB students and the Greater Bridgeport Community. It includes the Student Entrepreneur Center, where experienced mentors help turn ideas into sustainable companies, and the Technology Transfer office, where students and faculty from UB get help with patents, commercialization, and invention evaluation. The Bridgeport Accelerator Program also provides lectures, workshops, and offices for local entrepreneurs.



BLACC Bottle Team

This spring, new leadership has emerged. In January, the former Director of the Bauer Hall Innovation Center, Elena Cahill, was promoted to Vice President of Innovation, Strategy, and Advancement. She will continue to oversee the Innovation Center, but also be responsible for development of the University's strategic plan. She will manage advancement operations, including fundraising to support program expansion, capital projects, and other initiatives. She will also lead the University's government and external affairs programs, serving as the contact for city, state, and federal officials.

"As an alumna and long-time faculty member, Elena is an outstanding addition to the senior leadership team and a wonderful representative of the talented leaders that UB produces," said President Wilken. "I can't wait to see how our relationships with alumni, donors, government officials and other organizations grow under her management."

Her replacement as Director at Bauer Hall, Sherri Dente, Esq., comes to the role with a wealth of knowledge gained from her previous position as UB's Director of Technology Transfer and Venture Creation, overseeing the Technology Commercialization Group. In that role, she facilitated the transformation of UB and UB partner discoveries into products and services that benefit industry, society, and the Connecticut economy.

"I am thrilled to be part of this team and to have the opportunity to help fulfill the vision of the Bauer Innovation Center," said Dente. "We have a year ahead packed with events and programs, and I can't wait to see the impact our center has on the UB and Bridgeport communities."

She continues the tradition of Lunch and Learn lectures and workshops. Each Friday during the school year, the series hosts speakers who guide students to entrepreneurial success. These alternating lectures and hands-on workshops give students the opportunity to build knowledge and put it into practice. Event topics in Spring 2022 included developing prototypes, budget building, and preparing a pitch. "We're expanding the idea of how education happens here at UB," said Dente. "We have students who are thinking about starting businesses, not some time after college, but right now. This series is perfect for those forward-thinking students."

"We have students who want more difficult work to do," agreed Cahill. "We're trying to get deeper this year with our education so that students at every level can get what they need to succeed."

Students from the Entrepreneur Center continue to compete in contests like the State of Connecticut Collegiate



Top to bottom: Director of the Innovation Center Sherri Dente; Bauer Hall

Business Plan Competition, where we had two winners in Spring 2021. Later in the year, three UB teams were included among the 10 finalists in the statewide New Product Competition, open to Connecticut residents and students at Connecticut schools.

These entries had to be pre-revenue physical products that could be manufactured. "This great achievement by UB students was not unusual," said Dr. Khaled Elleithy, Dean of the College of Engineering, Business and Education, and Distinguished Professor of Computer Science and Engineering. "For the past 15 years, UB students have been consistently recognized in Connecticut business competitions."

MBA student Clovia McIntosh's project to build and market a collapsible bathtub to prevent toddlers from slipping won Third Place in the New Product Competition. She joined the Student Entrepreneur Center as an alumna before she even re-enrolled as a graduate student. She developed her company, IRL Innovations, under the mentorship of Professor Peter Divone. "Three years ago, I reached out to Professor Cahill and told her I had a business idea, and she informed me about the Student Entrepreneur Center," said McIntosh. "In addition to taking third place in the New Product Competition, I also received a \$5,000 grant from CT Next, which helped me create two versions of my

idea and turn it into a physical prototype.”

Computer Science and Engineering PhD student Mohamed Mohamed won second place in the New Product Competition with his next generation electric vehicle battery. “This innovation focuses on changing the electric vehicle’s battery cooling system that uses power for operation, increases the battery pack weight, and occupies a large space in the limited battery pack volume,” said Mohamed. “The SEC provided guidance and the legal team helped me to protect the idea by filing a provisional patent.”

MBA student Wenting Wang’s modified acupuncture cloth gown was a finalist in the New Product Competition. As a stay-at-home mother and student concentrating in finance and analytics intelligence at UB, she somehow found time to develop the gown, which is in its first production run. “Fall 2021 was my first semester on campus, and I finally got to experience the Student Entrepreneur Center,” said Wang. “My advisor is Professor Elena Cahill, and she is a rock star! UB offered a tremendous amount of resources that make everything possible.”

“The innovation center is there to provide guidance and a legal team,” said Collins’ mentor at the Entrepreneur Center, Peter Divone. “Students can get input from all the mentors and take advantage of that.”

Collins’ latest project, BLACC Bottle, exists at the intersection between design and culture. “We created a bottle that has a message of honesty, integrity, and transparency,” he said proudly. “Our mission at BLACC Bottle is to create luxurious products that represent love for oneself and love for all.” The project has moved quickly from idea to reality, starting with a branding initiative centered around an eco-friendly stainless steel 25-ounce bottle. This insulated bottle keeps liquid cold for 24 hours, has a deluxe feel to it when you hold it in your hand, and is painted with inspiring messages.

Fellow entrepreneurs Ralph White and Delano Bennett joined Collins to develop this idea. “I’ve surrounded myself with a great team,” said Collins. “I wanted to talk about how diversity and inclusion helps businesses grow.” The acronym “BLACC” stands for Bonafide Love Advancing Cultural Change. “It’s a reminder to lead with love for others and oneself,” he continued.

Collins and his team tried venues like the Black Rock Farmers Market and Entrepreneur Center mentor Mike Roer’s Emporium in downtown Bridgeport. Roer shows growing businesses like BLACC Bottle how to fulfill orders and ship them out, gives them customer training, and helps them find other places to sell their product. “It’s a great experience,” said Roer. “It’s actually about building students as entrepreneurs rather than their ventures.”

In September 2021, Collins’ hard work paid off when the NBA Lab picked up BLACC Bottle as a partner. NBA Lab subcontracts licenses to small and medium businesses and tests their products over two years. Based on results and revenue generated, they will introduce BLACC Bottle to the NBA to be an official partner. The design and content of the bottle will be the same with minor, personal modifications

for different teams, including the Knicks, Lakers, and Celtics. The NBA Lab will also send some to players and other stakeholders. “When you blend the NBA teams with the messaging that we have and what we stand for, I think it’s like a match made in heaven,” partner Ralph White told the *Connecticut Insider*.

“We are a small brand, for now,” agreed Collins. “We want to take our time and grow organically, but we are thinking big.”

It is clear that Collins, Wang, Mohamed, and McIntosh are part of the next generation of entrepreneurial leaders. They have been helped by the advisors and mentors at the Bauer Hall Innovation Center, and will go on to create a future generation of innovators. That’s what leaders do. They support each other; they raise everyone up. They create opportunities. And that is what the Bauer Hall Innovation Center is all about. ■



One of the biggest success stories to emerge this year has been Necas Collins’ business BLACC Bottle, which won First Place in the New Product Competition and Connecticut Collegiate Elevator Pitch. “Through SEC, I have received mentorship, legal help, introductions to industry leaders, and preparation for similar competitions,” said Collins, who is graduating with a dual MBA degree in Finance and Analytics. “SEC and its leadership team, along with our hard work and willingness to learn, have allowed us to become one of the many success stories at UB.”

Last year, Collins won first place at the Virtual Techstars Startup Weekend hosted by Sacred Heart University with his idea to create a platform called Moo-La Investment Group in order to help farmers in his native Jamaica raise capital in order to expand agricultural production.

**Necas Collins Speaking
at Faculty Research Day**

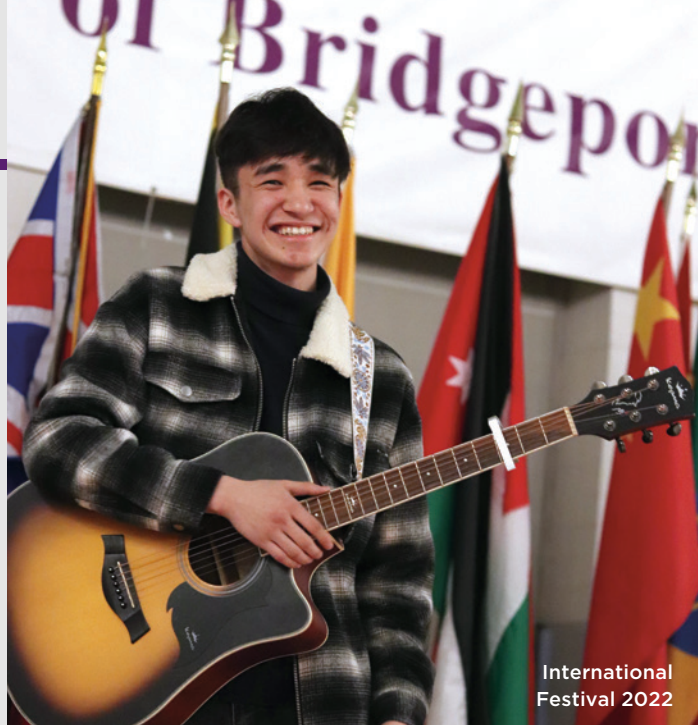
International Student Enrollment Rises Again

For decades, UB has been one of the most ethnically and racially diverse higher education institutions in the United States. Just before the pandemic in the academic year 2018-2019, 29% of its student population was comprised of international students. In decades past, that number was even higher. Now in 2021 and 2022, the University of Bridgeport is admitting hundreds of new international students to its beautiful Seaside Park campus.

The global pandemic had a markedly negative effect on the percentage of international students enrolled at UB and other American universities. However, once American consulates abroad started scheduling visa appointments for international students, more than 200 new students enrolled immediately in Fall 2021. Almost 300 additional new enrollees have joined them in Spring 2022. "The University of Bridgeport prides itself on being a diverse and welcoming campus," says President Danielle Wilken. "We are thrilled to greet students, faculty, and staff from around the world to enrich our vibrant community."

These new students have been brought to UB through a dynamic partnership with UB's International Admissions Office and the Enrollment Advisory Group (EAG), a global marketing and recruitment firm which specializes in international recruitment. In addition to a seasoned leadership and recruitment team, EAG works with third-party agencies around the world which guide students through the process of applying. "Historically, UB has always embraced working with third-party educational agencies," says Ken DiSaia, President of EAG. "These agencies have supported UB for many years and continue to support the university now that students' mobility to study in the US is back on the rise. They are speaking to students in cities and high schools around the world." These agencies also go far beyond recruitment seminars; they offer workshops to teach prospective students about visa applications, prepare them for mock interviews, and more.

It helps that UB has built a strong brand over decades with solid articulation agreements, faculty exchange, and a commitment to internationalization. "UB does an unbelievable job to help students with the process of applying and matriculating," says DiSaia. "EAG works in



concert with the team in UB's International Admissions office to create a synergy, which has resulted in achieving the enrollment objectives of the institution."

International students are benefitting from a realignment in the academic calendar. Through this realignment, there is now a full 15-week summer calendar, which is being offered for the first time in UB's long history. "We are unique among universities of our size in Connecticut," says Provost Manyul Im. "We benefit from substantial diversity and have a proud history of providing students with opportunities to learn from peers who have different life experiences. The perspectives and energy from our international students are some of the most valuable assets that UB has to offer."

Many of these incoming scholars are graduate students in business, computer science, and engineering. "The School of Engineering's international student population comes from 35 countries," says the Dean of the College of Engineering, Business, and Education, Dr. Khaled Elleithy. "The effort to recruit more international students is a major component of our plan to increase diversity and inclusion in different academic programs." In fact, the School of Engineering recently received the Bronze Award from the inaugural American Society of Engineering Education Diversity Recognition Program. The award was received by only 75 engineering schools in the nation and the University of Bridgeport was the only awardee from the State of Connecticut.

This is only the beginning. EAG and the agencies it works with throughout Asia, Africa, and beyond have found new markets and new students eager to attend the University of Bridgeport. "One of our priorities is diversifying the portfolio of the students' country of origin, particularly in the undergraduate market," says DiSaia. "We are projecting an additional 100-200 new international students enrolling for the summer semester, as well as 350 new international students this coming fall, which will be a record enrollment at UB for international students." ■

Veterans Oasis Re-Opened and Designated an Official Site by the Department of Veterans Affairs



The University of Bridgeport honored military members, veterans, and their families by re-opening the Veterans Oasis on campus. Now located in Mandeville Hall Rooms 19 and 21, this comfortable and safe place includes a meeting area for events and speakers, a lounge with sofas and chairs, a kitchen, a counseling room, and two study rooms. It is a place to relax, socialize, and study, as well as an interchange for veterans and currently serving military members to receive support and resources.

"It's a good thing to get the students involved, to help them achieve their goals, and to especially help those who protect their country," says Yvrose Romulus, the University of Bridgeport's Director of Strategic Programs. Romulus has been involved in the project every step of the way, from moving the oasis to this location "at the heart of the campus" to painting the room and furnishing it. She also talked to SCSU, Housatonic Community College, and Homes for the Brave, who will collaborate with UB on future events. "She's working so hard on this. It's amazing what she's done in a short time," says her colleague in the School of Business, Professor Michael Maccarone.

She had a lot of help from dedicated UB students like retired Staff Sergeant Juliet Taylor. Taylor advocates for veterans through Collaborative Exchange Veteran Services, an organization which assists veterans as they transition back to civilian society, and is currently enrolled in the Master's in Counseling program with a focus in mental health. She helped Romulus with recruiting and

fundraising, while six other student volunteers helped clear and prepare the room. Donations to support the project have also arrived from places like Sikorsky Aircraft. "There are so many people willing to help if you ask," says Romulus with pride.

After opening in Fall 2021, the Veterans Oasis was officially approved by the Department of Veterans Affairs and is serving veteran students through the Department of Veterans Affairs Work Study Allowance program. "Being recognized by the VA is a big deal," says Romulus. "It is exciting because our veterans see that we are working on their behalf, moving toward the creation of a more supportive environment and bringing financial assistance to them."

The Department of Veteran Affairs will pay three veteran UB students for up to a total of 1300 hours per year as Veteran Oasis Monitors. Each student will provide support to other student veterans through the management and administration of the Oasis, supervising daily activities, planning events, preparing records and reports, troubleshooting requests, and maintaining active communications with other student veterans.

The Veterans Oasis will provide a dynamic resource for veterans on campus for years to come. "We are always looking for different services for veterans and serving military students. Now they will have more of a presence here, and we will have more of a presence in the community," says Romulus. "This will be a place to nurture their studies and their spirits." ■

Yvrose Romulus and Juliet Taylor Open the Veterans Oasis

Human Services Students Giving Back and Getting Jobs in the Community

By Donna Oropall

University of Bridgeport Human Services students are supporting our community by fulfilling Internships and Practicums as they gain jobs in the community.

As Chair of the Human Services program in Behavioral Science at UB's College of Science and Society, I coordinate and oversee practicum and internship courses and placements for our advanced students. Human Services students are required to complete 3 experiential learning experiences in addition to their very formative and substantive training in the classroom, including 300 hours of service. This includes their Practicum, HUSV 277, which includes 100 hours and their internship, as well as HUSV 312, which includes 200 hours.

These requirements get our students into the community to fulfill their educational requirements and/or complete their experiential learning. In doing so, they are not just getting practical experience, but they are also enriching the community. I constantly hear accolades from supervisors on their positive experience with our students.

Regina Vermont, the Family Resource Center site coordinator at the Dunbar School, is one of many supervisors for these internships. "The biggest pleasure for me is watching students grow throughout the semester," she says. As the year progresses, the students gain confidence and competence to work as caseworkers, activity directors, coordinators, care coordinators and more.

Our students are delighted to be able to apply the knowledge that they receive in the classroom to their workplace and to see the fruits of their labor. "Interning in the community we are getting real experience as we are applying what we learn in the classroom," says Amoya Dixon, a senior Human Services major. "Everything starts to connect or make sense. Now I understand what we were learning in the classroom and am able to problem solve and make an impact."



“Interning in the community we are getting real experience as we are applying what we learn in the classroom.”

It appears that the combination of their classroom training and experiential learning has been effective in their professional development. Many of our seniors gain full-time employment from this program. This spring we have at least seven students that will be awaiting their college degree to begin their jobs in the Bridgeport Community and surrounding areas.

Working in the community has a positive impact on our students' future professional lives, and in turn they give back to our schools, agencies, clinics, and community centers their skills, positive attitude, and commitment to making lasting change. After doing the math we can see that in an average year our UB Human Services students give 7,000 hours of help to the community as they begin their careers. It is a privilege and pleasure to be part of this very important reciprocal relationship. ■

Dual Enrollment Program Connects UB to Connecticut High Schools



Four hundred Connecticut high school students earned college credits from the University of Bridgeport's Dual Enrollment/Early College Credit program during the 2021-2022 academic year. The program offers the opportunity for students to start earning up to 30 college credits as early as their sophomore year in high school. Students enroll in approved classes at their schools and receive academic credit that is equal to that of the same course taught at UB.

Currently, there are 17 available classes in three pathways – Humanities, STEM and Business. Courses range from Foundations of Entrepreneurship to Cell-Molecular Biology, from Second Programming Language to Phlebotomy, depending on what each high school wants to offer. In the fall semester of 2022, we are adding 6 new courses like eSports, Introduction to Drama, Dental Hygiene, Child Psychology or Lifespan Development Psychology, as well as an Education Pathway to complement UB's new Education Minor. "Students who take these classes have an easier transition to college," says Julie Demers. "And they see the great things that UB has to offer,

**High School Students
touring the campus**

like small classes, faculty access, and diversity."

So far, UB partners with 13 high schools in New Haven and Fairfield Counties. Soon, we will be expanding to Hartford County high schools thanks to our partnership with the Superintendent of Magnet Schools for Goodwin University, Dr. Salvatore Menzo, who is getting the word out about students earning college credit. Furthermore, our high school partners will be able to earn college credits in three manufacturing courses at Goodwin University.

Now, thanks to Director of the Ernest C. Trefz School of Business Tim Raynor and Dean Khaled Elleithy of the College of Engineering, Business and Education, UB is also expanding outreach internationally. The first on board is the American School of El Salvador.

"These students are learning that academic success is possible and setting straight common misperceptions about college being unattainable," says Vice President and Chief Administration Officer Dan Noonan. "This is a safe way for high school students to try out college coursework taught by appropriately trained faculty."

Each Dual Enrollment/Early College Credit Program course is offered through a specific college at the University of Bridgeport to ensure high academic standards. "When I did a recent observation in Seymour, the students and the teachers were excellent," agrees Prof. Patrick Frawley, who coordinates Math and STEM dual enrollments. "The student transcripts look good for any college, but if they come here to UB, that's even better, because they are ahead of the game."

Students pay a mere \$50 a credit hour, far below what they might pay for a college class. However, students who receive free or reduced-price lunch do not pay anything for this access to higher education. "UB will not let cost stand in the way of exposing our area high school students to quality higher education," says Vice President Noonan. "No boat rises to a low tide, but all boats rise to a high tide." ■

College of Arts & Sciences Renamed the College of Science & Society



The UB College of Science & Society is led by its new dean, Dr. Kathleen Engelmann. The academic degree programs within the college include biology, mathematics, psychology, counseling, human services, criminal justice, English, music, and general studies.

Since joining the UB faculty 14 years ago, Dr. Engelmann has helped to develop more than 40 programs, courses, and seminars, and has participated in key UB programs and initiatives including the DEI Council, University Senate and Faculty Research Council, among others. She

has served as an associate professor of biology since 2014, as chair of the undergraduate biology program since 2017, and as Faculty Council President.

“The Science & Society name better reflects the programs we now offer within the College and is aligned with UB’s focus on career development,” said Dean Engelmann. “I look forward to helping our students succeed in their chosen fields of study so that they can apply what they learn both inside and outside the classroom to their future careers.” ■

Dean Kathleen Engelmann talks with Prof. Douglas House



Khristian Kemp-Delisser

Director of Multicultural Affairs Honored By Peers

UB’s Director of Multicultural Affairs, Khristian Kemp-Delisser, EdD, is wrapping up three years as National Co-chair of the Gender & Sexuality Knowledge Community of NASPA. A professional association of leaders in higher education focused on student affairs, NASPA members elected Kemp-Delisser, now in their second year at UB. While confronting the effects of the pandemic, they have built a robust online community and created online webinars. “My work with NASPA showcases one of many ways that UB employees can provide leadership and expertise in their fields,” says Kemp-Delisser. “It provided a national platform to exchange knowledge about important DEI issues and best practices from UB with fellow experts and colleagues throughout the country. We elevate our communities through this dynamic exchange.” For these efforts, the NASPA African American Knowledge Community honored Kemp-Delisser by naming them one of the Stellar 50 Professionals in the Field.

How We Use Debate in the English Language Institute

By Steven Rashba

UB's English Language Institute (ELI) sees its primary mission as promoting exchange and understanding among peoples of all nations by helping them improve their knowledge of the English language as a medium of international communication. On a practical level, ELI prepares non-native English speakers in intermediate and advanced level academic English language skills prior to enrolling in degree programs at the University of Bridgeport. International language learners looking to improve their career prospects through advanced study of English are also welcome at ELI.

ELI Faculty Debating
near Mandeville Hall

One of the best ways we've found to do this is to engage students in a series of formal

research-driven academic debates. ESL students often lack experience and confidence when making academic and professional presentations to faculty and professionals, and this can work to their detriment during their career development. Our debates give them the chance to improve their language skills in a fun and interesting way. The themes always cover non-political, unresolved topics and provide students the opportunity to further develop their research, critical thinking, and teambuilding skills.

ELI Senior Instructor Karen Howling has been leading debates with ELI students for more than 15 years. According to Howling, "These academic debates give our students the opportunity to showcase their knowledge and speaking skills." She usually requires her students to dress in business attire to make the activity appear more professional and high stakes. She commented that she has witnessed seemingly shy and reticent students stand up to the challenge and make powerful presentations on debate day. Students usually comment that they were nervous initially but developed a strong sense of self-confidence by the end.

Douglas House, a long-time professor at UB but new addition to the ELI faculty, co-coordinated two debates for ELI students during the fall 2021 semester. House and Howling were both impressed with the performance of their class as the students politely argued their well-researched pros and cons of vegetarianism. Later in the semester, the same teams debated the advantages and disadvantages of social media.

Debate has become an integral part of the Advanced Listening/Speaking curriculum and the culmination of the speaking and presentation skills gained during the academic semester. There are no so-called winners or losers in ELI debates; they are essentially an opportunity for students to develop a plan, research their topic and explain it well when under pressure. ■



Interview with Professor James Novoa ('14)

You were a transfer student; what made you come to UB?

I'd squandered opportunities in my educational path and my mom, the one I owe everything meaningful in this world, encouraged me to give it one final shot. I had many credits out of the way so that left me with a final opportunity to focus on getting a degree I cared about. My background was in film, but I always wanted to dive into literature. When I looked for programs, I particularly liked the idea of the teachers being authors themselves. That was a deciding factor for me.

What did you learn in the English program?

I remember feeling frustrated at how well-read so many others were. I overcompensated by reading as much as humanly possible, raising my hand at everything, volunteering to help in any way, joining different clubs, and making friends with all different types of people from diverse backgrounds. I learned to discern between surface reading and deep analysis. It was the beginning of learning everything I missed my whole life. In many ways, the way I teach is a direct reflection in hoping my students might feel a similar way to how I felt then.

Why did you become a teacher?

Half my family on my Mom's side are educators/creatives, and I'm an artist, but teaching seemed foreign to me. I adored being a student (always will be), but actual teaching appeared like a chore. Then Dr. Ed Geist recommended me to peer-tutor because he saw how much I helped my classmates. This spiraled into tutoring for a while after I graduated, then into teaching at an affluent private school. My former Heads of School gave me complete and unbridled freedom to craft classes. Over time I created courses like: "Spoken Word/Slam Movement," "Graphic Novel Memoirs," "Sci-Fi, Cyberpunk

& Consciousness in Lit," and "Creative Writing: Unorthodox Voices." Molding these concepts into full-fledged courses is the ultimate learning experience, so I continue being a student.

I think teaching also allowed me to help my students understand that education doesn't have to be boring or off-putting. My work as an educator is one of liberation, not only in discerning preconceived approaches toward academia or what is deemed established literature, but also in examining and freeing from the mindset that has forged such paths and creating newer, enlightened ones.

What's it like teaching at a college you attended?

It's a bit surreal. I see myself in many of my students and try my best to encourage them to understand that their education is their own. I've always had tremendous gratitude for UB and for what it meant to me and it's my way to give back with an exciting approach. Like taking the wheel and taking newer routes down alleys and off-road that weren't taken before.

You are also a writer. How does that influence your teaching?

I want to help my students know that their voices matter and need to be heard. That the work is never simply in crafting and honing skills but standing in direct defiance toward everything within them that tells them to quit or silence that voice. That in the midst of the muck, their lotus resides. And that if they fight, with fervor and fury, that their voice could still bloom. ■

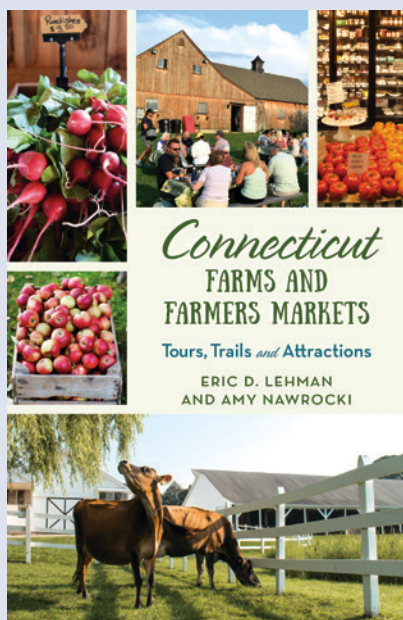
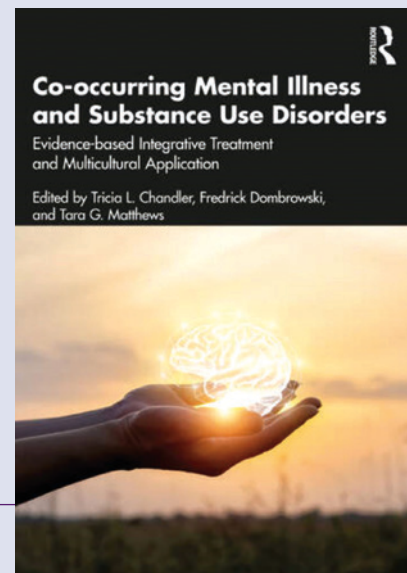
"I want to help my students know that their voices matter and need to be heard."



Prof. James Novoa
talks with Department
Chair Amy Nawrocki

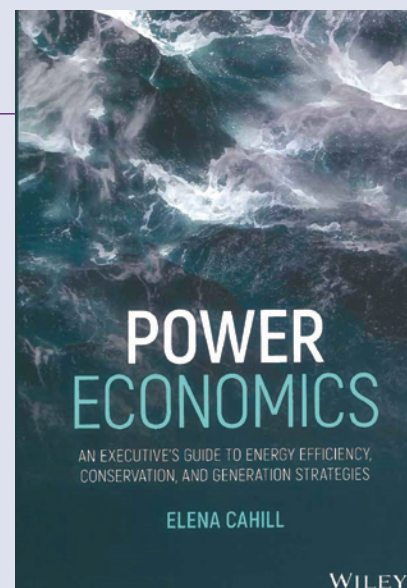
Book Lines

Assistant Professor in the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program Dr. Fred Dombrowski is the co-editor of a new book called *Co-occurring Mental Illness and Substance Use Disorders: Evidence-based Integrative Treatment and Multicultural Application* (Routledge, 2022). Traditionally, these two conditions have been treated separately by different services, and this book is designed to educate both kinds of counselors. “This book is written by counselors for counselors,” says Dr. Dombrowski. “We hope it creates closer collaboration between fields to better serve the people who need help.” Dombrowski was also recently named President-Elect of the American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA) and currently serves on the Diplomate in Clinical Mental Specialties approval team.



Associate Professors of English Amy Nawrocki and Eric D. Lehman have written their fourth book together, *Connecticut Farms and Farmers Markets: Tours, Trails, and Attractions* (Globe Pequot Press, 2022). The book profiles agritourism opportunities throughout the state, including local markets, festivals, pick-your-owns, museums, tree farms, fairs, and much more. “As food and travel writers we love to help readers explore and participate in the culture around them,” says Nawrocki. “With *Connecticut Farms and Farmers Markets* we hope people will be further inspired to explore agricultural venues as a valuable way to connect to the land, the food that comes from it, and the people who make that happen. It’s a way to both build community and have a lot of fun.”

Vice President of Innovation, Strategy, and Advancement Elena Cahill’s new book, *Power Economics: An Executive’s Guide to Energy Efficiency, Conservation, and Generation Strategies* (Wiley 2021), gives practical and actionable advice on how to both cut energy costs and reduce the destructive impact of climate change. “I have done my best to convey the complexity and urgency of the matter,” says Cahill. “Working together, we can shed many of our wasteful energy habits and begin the task of building a world that is safe, sustainable and healthy.” In this groundbreaking work, she demonstrates clearly that energy ethics is not in conflict with the company bottom line and provides a map for the future. ■



Alumni Lines

Homecoming Weekend

On October 23, 2021, alumni, faculty, staff, students, and their families celebrated their Purple Knight Pride at Homecoming Weekend. The beautiful fall weather on the shores of Long Island Sound made for the perfect environment to reconnect with friends and visit old campus haunts. “The only thing better than last year’s homecoming...is next year’s!” said Director of Development and Alumni Relations Jhanay Abrams. Now called Knights Fest, homecoming is one of the best times to tour the campus, learn what’s happening at the University, and remember why you loved being a student at UB. ■



Meet the Advancement Team



Pictured here: Director of Advancement Agata Slattery, Director of Advancement Services Alexa Bottoni, Director of Development and Alumni Relations Jhanay Abrams, and Director of Strategic Programs Yvrose Romulus

As the University of Bridgeport nears its 2027 centennial, we here on the advancement team want to reintroduce ourselves and our mission.

As you know, we create lifelong relationships and sustain those relationships through events like Knights Fest and reunions. We keep alums like you informed and active and gather valuable suggestions from you to develop the university over time.

But advancement is so much more than just fundraising and alumni relations. We help develop the university’s strategic plan, and intersect with recruitment, marketing, and communications. We help maintain academic excellence by planning and executing improvement projects, scholarship initiatives, and other common causes. We also build relationships with corporations, foundations, and civic leaders in order to support the mission of the university.

We are moving into Bates Hall on Park Avenue (pictured here) and would love for you to stop by and help us build the university’s vision and culture. We are here and we are listening. ■



Catching Up with Susan Heckman O'Hara '84

What do you love most about the University of Bridgeport?

I paid for my own college and there were days I had \$50 in my checking account. Somehow, I worked many jobs and was able to manage it. But as much as I struggled financially when I was at UB, I have so many good memories there. I was an RA, I liked being involved in campus life. My sister played volleyball on a full scholarship, and that's how I first got

introduced to the university. She was a dental hygiene major and so I got my teeth cleaned all the time. I had the cleanest teeth in the college. And it wasn't just my sister; my whole family went there. Today, I live in a sea of University of Bridgeport friends and family.

Why is the University of Bridgeport such a special place today? How is it different from when you attended?

The school looks a little different than when I went there, but not crazy different. It's still a great place to get a fresh start. We're in a better place now to have conversations about culture and finances, about the struggles different kinds of people have. What is great about UB is that we're saying if you just try, we're going to help you get there and give you access to every tool you have. It's what first-generation students need.

How do you see the future of UB?

It's in a great place. It's sitting in reality. We have a business model that works, that looks sustainable to me. I am confident that we'll keep adapting and making sure the model is

profitable. The story of UB could have been a tragedy so many times. But every time it has come out of the ashes like a rising phoenix. You get the right people who care enough and success happens.

You've been a leader in giving all these years, you have the legacy scholarship, promoting challenge days, and of course the Heckman Center. What inspires you to give back?

My motivation to give back came from the gratefulness that was instilled in me. Working so hard and later in life gaining financial success made me realize how important it is to keep helping those who are coming up through the ranks and allowing them opportunities. When is it enough and when am I going to take the leap and start giving intentionally? So now, that's how I live my whole life. How much do I really need? How much do other people really need? If you want to feel good, then serve others and do something for someone else.

What do you see as your role at UB as we move forward?

I was on the board of trustees during the recent transition, and the whole board came together. It strengthened my intentions towards UB. I still want to be financially involved, to keep that connection and commitment. It's a very deliberate act for me, and it is never ending.

What advice do you have for young alumni who are just starting their relationship with the school?

It is taught as well as innate that you learn to give back. I taught my children when they were young, if you can give someone a ride, give them a ride. If you can buy them a cup of coffee, buy them a cup of coffee. Eventually, it will get to the point where you can give \$100, or give \$500 to someone, and it will be meaningful and make sense and feel good. I have learned so much by learning to do that, learning to give. ■



Shamare Holmes ('16) Helps Teach Leadership to Girls of All Ages

As Program Director at LiveGirl, University of Bridgeport alum Shamare Holmes is giving girls and young women the skills and confidence to become future leaders. In 2022, she returned to UB to talk to college students about paid internship and mentoring opportunities and brought middle school students to campus for a spring season of the Confidence Club.

"I'm excited to do my part," says Holmes, who graduated from UB as a Mass Communications major in 2016. "I've always wanted to give back." She joined the LiveGirl team in 2019 as a Mentor and now serves as the Program Director. She also worked as a Program Director for Her Time, a network for women impacted by mass incarceration, as Community Organizer for the Bridgeport Education Alliance for Public Schools, and as the Director of Girls Reality Empowerment Circle (GREC).

Sheri West, a former finance executive at General Electric, founded LiveGirl in 2014 as a way to build confident and inclusive leaders and a world free from both gender and racial inequality. So far, the non-profit organization has reached over 12,000 young women, from grades 5 to college-aged, through free-of-charge innovative leadership development and mentoring programs. "We're partnering with Boys and Girls Clubs across Connecticut, community centers, middle schools and giving programs in libraries," says Holmes. "With special emphasis to make sure we are reaching girls of color in communities like Bridgeport."

Confidence Club is the signature middle-school program, teaching respect and gratitude for oneself and how to thrive in groups with people who might be different. "Once you are comfortable in your own skin, you won't be so concerned with what others are doing," says Holmes. "In that way, teaching

self-love teaches love for others." In addition to this successful program and the LiveGirl League, they are also kicking off Leadership Lab for high school students in Fairfield County to complement the Confidence Club. "In middle school we teach you how to lead yourself," says Holmes. "And in high school, we teach you how to lead others."

She Works is a program in which LiveGirl helps rising high school seniors and college students build career-readiness skills and connects them with internships at companies that demonstrate female leadership. "We help young women to tap into a network even if they are not well-connected," says Holmes. The program teaches skills like resume-writing, interviewing, networking, and public speaking, as well as giving access to career development tools.

Holmes was on campus to give UB students information about the She Works program and run a "Confidence Club: College Edition" with ice-breakers, affirmations, and much more. She also brought 15 middle-school girls to campus for Confidence Club, eight sessions of ground-breaking mentorship and skills-building, and a chance to just be themselves.

"Shamare is a great example of the pride UB students have gained from their educational experience," says Stephanie Beach, the university's Director of Career Development. "Alums want to give back to this industry and serve as role models to our current students. Not only do alums bring opportunities, but they also prove to our students who they can become in their future."

"I'm excited to bring a project like this to the University of Bridgeport," says Holmes. "It opens doors to students right in their backyard." She pauses, then proudly declares the informal student slogan: "U-B-You-Know!" ■

Alumni Notes

Mendel Murray ('18, '20) received the 2021 Dorothy Keller New Professional of the Year Award, presented by NASPA, the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators. Murray works as the Manager of Academy Player Care and Engagement with the Toronto Football Club.

Muneer Alshowkan, PhD ('17) is now a Research Scientist in the Quantum Communications and Networking Group at the U.S. Department of Energy's Oak Ridge National Laboratory. "The field is growing and there are many opportunities for jobs," says Alshowkan. "I would encourage anyone to follow their dreams and pursue engineering at UB."

Alexandra Pisco ('15) has been working full time at the University of Bridgeport since September of 2016. She began in the Student Employment department and moved to Human Resources in August of 2020. In November Alex was promoted from HR Assistant to HR Specialist.

Dave Boykin ('10) and his fiancée welcomed Amaya Sky Boykin to their family on October 15, 2022.

Cheryl L. Lyon, ND ('07) was appointed Interim Associate Director of Academic Affairs for the University of Bridgeport School of Chiropractic in January 2022. Her abstract from the March Chiropractic Academy for Research Leadership (CARL) Conference, "Characteristics of Chronic Musculoskeletal Pain Sufferers Treated in a University Affiliated Complementary and Integrative Health Care Clinic," was accepted for publication in the Journal of the Canadian Chiropractic Association (JCCA).

Wallace Southerland III



Wallace Southerland III, PhD, ('91, '93) became vice president for student affairs and dean of students at Michigan Technological University in Houghton, MI, on July 1, 2021.

William C. Campbell, JD ('85) was appointed Director of the Massachusetts Office of Campaign and Political Finance in April 2021.

Richard Kendall ('72) is working as an insurance adjuster and serves as a part-time missionary to India. He is remarrying on September 18th, 2022.

Catherine DaCosta ('72) tells us: "I am a better student of life now, and still learning!" ■



Golden Knights Return to Commencement

It was a cool but sunny morning May 1st, 2022. The day celebrated over 1,400 undergraduate and graduate UB students, but it also welcomed back alumni from the class of 1972: this year's Golden Knights.

The Golden Knights are UB alumni celebrating 50 years since their graduation. Wearing gold academic robes, they are recognized on stage during the commencement ceremony. This year, the Golden Knights and their guests arrived from Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, and as far as Virginia, for a light Sunday breakfast at the Hartford Healthcare Amphitheater in Bridgeport, CT. The group changed into their golden robes, walked out on stage, and were honored amongst speakers, graduates and their families. After opening remarks, they watched the remainder of the ceremony from the Harbor Club, a VIP suite overlooking the stadium. Afterwards, the Golden Knights gathered for lunch and received their certificates signed by President Danielle Wilken.

"We were honored to celebrate with our alumni from the class of 1972 this year," shared Jhanay Abrams, Director of Development & Alumni Relations. "It was truly special to watch each Golden Knight walk on stage and to be recognized in such a special way. We look forward to continuing this tradition for years to come." ■

Remembering...

The UB Community mourns the loss of loyal alum Richard Michael Whitcomb ('60, '66), who passed away on July 6, 2021, at the age of 85. Raised in Bellows Falls, Vermont, Dick Whitcomb chose the University of Bridgeport, where he was accepted on a full athletic scholarship and earned both undergraduate and master's degrees. Dick later completed a second master's and sixth-year degree at Fairfield University.

Dick's most significant personal accomplishment at UB was getting his future wife, Barbara, to finally accept his offer to be "pinned." After college, Dick served in the United States Army, and accepted a teaching and coaching position at St. Luke's school in New Canaan, Connecticut, where he spent his entire career. He supported countless organizations, including his alma mater, and he accepted UB's 2019 Distinguished Alumni award for Leadership in Philanthropy. ■

Physician Assistant Institute Creates Kelly Anne Caulfield Memorial Scholarship Fund

Memory runs deep at UB, and the formation of a memorial scholarship fund to honor Kelly Anne Caulfield, M.S. '18, is the perfect example.

Kelly passed away suddenly at the age of 35 on December 23, 2020. Two years earlier she graduated with her M.S., summa cum laude, earning membership in Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society, Pi Alpha Honor Society for Physician Assistants, American Academy of Physician Assistants, Connecticut Academy of Physician Assistants, and Alpha Epsilon Delta, the National Health Preprofessional Honor Society.

"We are extremely pleased to establish this memorial scholarship fund

in honor of Kelly and in partnership with the University," said Kelly's parents Patrick and Carolyn Caulfield. "She loved the UBPAI and was very grateful for the amazing education she received there. This fund will provide many scholarships to students in the years to come and assist them to achieve their dreams of becoming physician assistants, just like Kelly."

The first scholarship will be awarded in the summer of 2022, and additional scholarships will be awarded every year thereafter. Those interested in contributing can visit give.bridgeport.edu and note that your gift is intended for the "Kelly A. Caulfield, MS 2018 Memorial Scholarship Fund." ■



Kelly Anne Caulfield (left, in red) with her best friend Taylor Kaplan at their UBPAI graduation in 2018



Remembering Valerie Powell-Baldwin, One Hundred Percent Faithful

Valerie Powell-Baldwin ('75, '89) was one of the most familiar faces around UB for over four decades. Most prominently she served as the University Registrar but was better known as the woman who knew everything. If you had a question about how the university worked (or didn't), Valerie knew the answer. Her favorite quote was, "I meant what I said, and I said what I meant. An elephant's faithful one hundred percent."

She is survived by her daughters, Raelynn and Myia. "My mom was the most amazing person on the planet," Myia said. "A fighter for what she believed. She was my role model and best friend. I miss her every day." Myia "grew up" at UB, graduated in 2016 with an M.A. in East Asian and Pacific Rim Studies, and is the Audio-Visual Coordinator on campus today. "It has become a part of my family and a home away from home. The sense of community that we have is something unique," she said. "Mom's heart and UB's influence have both made me into the woman I am today." ■

Fellow UB Alumni,

I would like to introduce myself as the new President of the University of Bridgeport Alumni Association, Board of Directors (UBAA).

I graduated from the College of Business Administration in 1974. I have enjoyed a long, varied, and well-travelled career. I am currently a Senior Transformation Leader at IBM and live in New York. On behalf of UB, I serve as a member of the Industry Advisory Board for the College of Engineering, Business and Education. I am also an active mentor and a guest lecturer, specializing in Supply Chain Management.

You are probably aware by now that UB was acquired by Goodwin University and we are just coming up on the one-year anniversary. I recently had the chance to spend time with the leadership team of both UB and Goodwin and the excitement for the future of UB (which remains an independent entity) is palpable. In the coming weeks and months, you will see more direct communication on the improvements, so please watch the website and stay in touch. I am incredibly optimistic about UB's future and look forward to doing what I can to foster this success.

On a related note, the University and the UB Alumni Association (UBAA) are committed to reconnect with alumni. We will be collaborating to provide more, and hopefully more, and hopefully more meaningful, outreach to you. Look for news on upcoming monthly events along with regular updates from myself and the UBAA. We are excited to reconnect with opportunities for alumni to be involved through mentoring, giving, sponsorships, and more.

Please keep your contact information current and if you know other Alumni that may have fallen off the correspondence list, help them to update their information on the UB website by going to bridgeport.edu/alumni/update-info.

As a closing note, I want to remind you to keep the dates October 7, 8, and 9 open for fall "Knights Fest." Homecoming is being enhanced to provide events for alumni, students, faculty, family, and friends to enjoy time on campus. More information will be coming soon so stay tuned.

Sincerely,

William "Bill" Moran '74
President
Alumni Association Board of Directors

Old and New Faces Take Charge of UB Sports

As you first walk through the hallowed halls of Harvey Hubbell Gymnasium, you might be forgiven for thinking you have entered a time machine.

The first face you'll see is Jay Moran, Vice President of Athletics. He rejoined the Purple Knights last year, after previously serving as athletic director for UB from 2004 until 2014. In 2014 he left to become the mayor of Manchester, Connecticut, though he also kept his eyes on sports as the athletic director at Southern Connecticut State University.



“During my time at the University of Bridgeport I experienced some of the most meaningful professional accomplishments of my career,” said Moran. “I am honored to have the opportunity to rejoin the Purple Knights and work with our coaches and athletic staff to ensure the success of the Purple Knights for years to come.”

In the office next door is Anthony Vitti, Class of 2003, and former Director of Athletics from July of 2014 through June of 2019. He's back now as the Purple Knights' Senior Associate Athletic Director for External Operations. “As a former athlete and alumnus, the University of Bridgeport is very special to me – it's home,” said Vitti. “I'm thrilled to be back and get to work as we move the department forward during this exciting time for the institution.”

Abbie Jones moves upfield with the ball

Nearby is Kate Smullen, who joined UB as the women's lacrosse coach in 2010, then worked as the equipment and home game manager, the Assistant Compliance Director, and the Associate Director of Athletics for Business Affairs. Now, as the Senior Associate Director of Athletics and Senior Women's Administrator, she and Jared Orazio, Chuck Sadowski, and Richard Wisor complete the administrative team in Hubbell gym.

However, as you spend more time at Hubbell Gymnasium, you will find new faces amongst the old. The head coach for the inaugural NCAA Division II men's lacrosse team, Stephen Tempone, is a former lacrosse player from the New York Institute of Technology at NYIT, where he set an NCAA record for the most goals scored in a championship game and played a major role in helping to lead the school to its first national championship in 1997. He spent 13 years in various coaching roles and comes to UB after launching the varsity men's lacrosse program at Palm Beach Atlantic University and serving as its head coach since 2018.

“Jay and UB have a strong reputation in NCAA Division II athletics, and I could not pass up this opportunity to come launch a collegiate lacrosse program back in the Northeast,” said Tempone. “I'm anxious to begin building up my coaching staff and start recruiting the first Purple Knights men's lacrosse team.”

Another new face this coming year will be Tania Armellino, the new women's soccer head coach. She comes to UB after serving as the head women's soccer coach at the State University of New York (SUNY) Plattsburgh in Plattsburgh, New York. During her eight seasons there as head coach, she led her team to the State University of New York Athletic Conference (SUNYAC) tournament seven times, reaching the finals in 2017.

“Tania is a great addition to the University of Bridgeport Athletics family,” said VP Moran. “She brings a great deal of passion and enthusiasm for the sport of women's soccer and has a wealth of knowledge from her over two decades of coaching experience. I look for

Side Lines



Clockwise: Mason Williams going in for a layup; Jaden Drollinger helps her team defeat Roberts Wesleyan; Anisha Hill takes control



her to continue the tremendous success that our women's soccer program has had in recent years."

New teams need new coaches, too, and Gregg Schmidt will be taking charge of not one, but four – the men's and women's indoor and outdoor track and field teams and men's and women's cross country. He comes to UB from Post University in Waterbury, where he coached numerous all-conference and regional student athletes plus several conference champions, who produced a total of 70 school records in indoor and outdoor competitions.

"Gregg's wealth of experience at all levels of intercollegiate track and field coaching and the breadth of his knowledge in so many events make him a perfect choice as head coach to launch our track and field programs at UB," said VP Moran. "His ability to grow a program and his presence on the track and field on the East Coast will also be a huge benefit to the University."

"I'm humbled and honored to have been selected to build the University of Bridgeport's men's and women's track and field program from the ground up," said Schmidt. "I'm anxious to begin recruiting the first Purple Knights track and field squads and add to the legacy of athletics excellence that is part of UB."

That legacy is moving into the 21st century with the eSports program. The new head coach, Ali Dika, will lead this new team to compete against other schools in Connecticut and beyond as members of the Eastern Collegiate Athletic

Conference. Along with years of personal experience in eSports as a member of the University of Connecticut Gaming Club, Dika currently serves as the North American eSports manager for eSports Entertainment Group, and previously served as president and director of business relations for the North American Competitive Collegiate Series.

"eSports is rapidly growing in popularity on college campuses, and the launch of our eSports program is in great hands with Ali," said VP Moran. "His enthusiasm and knowledge of all aspects of gaming will give the program an edge to get up and running quickly in this highly competitive sport."

On the far side of campus, a new face is David Graham, who comes to UB from Johnson & Wales University in North Miami. As the Director of the Wheeler Recreation Center and Intramural Sports, Graham's three decades of experience in collegiate athletics and recreation will help him reorganize the department. In the upcoming seasons, he plans to offer co-ed intramural sports including basketball, soccer, table tennis, cornhole, volleyball, flag football and dodgeball. He will also revitalize the bowling alley, fitness class programming, and wellness programming.

"Student wellness is a passion of mine, and I'm excited to join the Purple Knights family to help grow the campus recreation program at UB," said Graham. "Our goal is to make coming over to the Wheeler Recreation Center one of the best parts of the day for everyone on campus. We will offer high-quality fitness, wellness and intramural programs to promote healthy habits that our Purple Knights will take with them when they leave UB."

Whether the leaders are old or new, the future looks bright for sports and recreation at the University of Bridgeport. "The coaches are feeling empowered to be in charge of their destiny," said Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer Dan Noonan. "And therefore, the students are, too." ■

UB Joins the Central Atlantic Collegiate Conference



The rich athletic tradition at the University of Bridgeport has been secured with a unanimous acceptance as the newest member of the Central Atlantic Collegiate Conference (CACC). UB will become a full-time member of the conference beginning on July 1, 2022 and everyone on campus is excited to usher in a new era for the Purple Knights. “UB is thrilled to accept the Central Atlantic Collegiate Conference’s invitation to join an exceptional group of institutions that shine both academically and athletically,” says President Danielle Wilken. “We look forward to a successful partnership that will provide more opportunities for our student-athletes to compete and excel throughout the tri-state area, Delaware, and Pennsylvania.”

“I have nothing but good things to say about Bridgeport’s time in the East Coast Conference,” says Vice President for Athletics Jay Moran. “The opportunity to join this top-notch group of institutions that make up the Central Atlantic Collegiate Conference will benefit both our student-athletes and our athletic programs. This partnership is a win-win for both the University of Bridgeport and the CACC.”

In the Fall of 2022, UB will begin to compete as a CACC member in the sports of baseball, men’s basketball, women’s basketball, men’s cross country, women’s cross country, women’s lacrosse, men’s soccer, women’s soccer, softball, women’s volleyball, and three new sports, including men’s lacrosse and men’s and women’s track and field. UB student athletes will compete against opponents at 12 other member

Top to bottom:
Sophomore Hailey Kim tees up against Assumption; UB Soccer Team; Justin DeSane carries the Purple Knight sword into battle

schools, including Bloomfield College, Caldwell University, Chestnut Hill College, Dominican College, Felician University, Georgian Court University, Goldey-Beacom College, Holy Family University, Nyack College, Post University, Thomas Jefferson University and Wilmington University.

The CACC features the smallest geographic footprint in NCAA Division II, with all 13 schools located within four hours of each other. The reduced travel time enables student-athletes to remain in class longer, which contributes to the high academic performance of student athletes in the conference. According to the NCAA, the CACC is tied for third out of 23 Division II conferences for the highest academic success rate score at 84%, eight points higher than the national average. The CACC is also tied for fifth in NCAA Division II for the highest federal graduation rate (65%).

Those reasonable driving distances are good for alums, too. “This change will allow more alumni attendance at future matches, especially for those living throughout the northeast in Connecticut, Delaware, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania,” says Director of Development and Alumni Relations Jhanay Abrams. “It will let us all demonstrate our school spirit and cheer on our fellow Purple Knights.” ■



Lorraine Galow Confronts Destiny as UB Gymnastics Coach

Sometimes, destiny comes knocking, and you must answer the call. Other times, you have to pick up the phone yourself. University of Bridgeport alum Lorraine Galow had a tenured job as an elementary school teacher, but when she heard that her alma mater was hiring a new gymnastics coach, she made a call to Senior Associate Director of Athletics Kate Smullen.

“What are my chances?” she said.

“Are you serious? Are you going to leave teaching?” Kate asked in astonishment.

“If I have to, yes. I’m going to do it.”

There were many other applications for the job, but after several rounds of interviews she became the new head coach of the UB Gymnastics Team. “Becky Ferraro, the assistant coach when I was a student at UB, predicted this years ago,” she laughed. “I guess it was destiny.”

After Galow arrived in Bridgeport from her hometown of Suwanee, Georgia, she quickly became a star on balance beam and uneven bars, racking up a long list of accomplishments. She became a champion in vault, uneven bars, and all-around in both the ECAC and NCAA, as well as a USAG All-American and three-time Division 1 Regional Qualifier for the NCAA Championships. The ECAC named her Athlete of the Year in 2009 and 2010, and in 2013 her many accomplishments were honored with the ECC John Smilie Jr. Award and the USAG Mari-Rae Soper Spirit of the Sport Award.

And it wasn’t all just individual accomplishments: during her sophomore year, the UB Gymnastics Team won its first of six national championships. “My first competition as a freshman, and our team scored a 176 and my last competition we scored a 196,” she said. “It was always about doing it

for each other, to get tiny UB on the map.”

Her academic performance was just as impressive, with three semesters on the Dean’s list and four on the President’s list, earning her a three-time USAG Scholar Athlete award. She graduated with a degree in Psychology with a minor in Human Services in 2011, and went on to earn an M.S. in Elementary Education in 2013. She injured both knees at the same time during the 2nd competition of her senior year, but came back to compete for her fourth season while in graduate school. She then served as an assistant coach from 2014-2020, while teaching elementary school in nearby Trumbull.

But when the head coach position opened, she rethought her career as an elementary school teacher. “My mom had sewed all 50 of my UB shirts into a quilt,” she said with a smile. “Then I found out that gymnastics was coming back, and that they’re hiring.” She had considered being an assistant coach at a nearby university, but after attending two practices decided it wasn’t for her. “During those practices, I realized that it wasn’t just about coaching college gymnastics, it was about coaching at UB,” she said. “Everything that we have worked for, the traditions and culture we created, everything we ever loved, wasn’t just gymnastics, it was UB gymnastics.”

Galow chose Mark Sorrentino to be her assistant coach. He comes to UB with over 25 years of gymnastics coaching experience and is the Connecticut State Chair for USA Gymnastics. “We are so excited for Mark to join our UB family, and we know that he will make a wonderful impact on our student-athletes,” she said. “His years of experience, plus his knowledge of the gymnastics landscape in



“They are people before they are students, and students before they are athletes,” she continued thoughtfully. “We take care of the person first. The product will always be better when we appreciate that.”



the state, will be a great benefit to our program.”

Gymnast Alexis Richardson was new to UB, but she knew the value of having someone like Galow in the head coaching position. “When we found out that Lorraine got the job as head coach, we were all so excited,” she said. “Lorraine knows what it takes to be a successful gymnast after being on the team through many championship winning seasons.”

That first year as head coach has been a challenge, to say the least. After the pandemic cut down the team to one of the smallest gymnastics programs in the country, Galow had her work cut out for her. “It’s nothing like I ever expected. I only had from July 6 to orientation to recruit and couldn’t even talk to them because of NCAA rules,” she said. “We ended up with seven new gymnasts, which was a win in itself.”

Then, Covid-19 and injuries dogged the tiny team of 12 throughout the season as they rebuilt a culture and competitive spirit. “Every time someone got hurt or sick, someone else would step up,” Galow said proudly. “Some gymnasts competed in events that they hadn’t since high school.” She found her own coaching style during this tough season, one very different from what she grew up with. “They are people before they are students, and students before they are athletes,” she continued thoughtfully. “We take care of the person first. The product will always be better when we appreciate that.”

Despite these struggles, Galow helped five of her athletes earn individual event qualifications to the 2022 USA Gymnastics National Championship Meet in Ithaca New York: Olivia Imbarlina on beam and vault, Nicole Javinett on beam, Crystal Gwinn on the floor exercise, Second Team All American Kiana Session in the all-around, and 5th year senior and First Team All-American Kathryn Doran, on the bars and beam. “We’ve had a really tough year,” Doran told News 12 Connecticut. “It’s exciting to wear purple at nationals.” Doran



posted a career-high score of 9.990 on the balance beam for second place in the event, and a 9.900 on the bars, placing in third. Her teammate Olivia Imbarlina came in fourth on the beam.

“I am so grateful Lorraine applied to take on the head coach position at UB,” said Doran. “In her first season she had to deal with a lot of adversity, and I think this will only help her become even more successful during her time as head coach.”

“This season brought many challenges, but we could not have gotten through it without our strong leader,” agreed Alexis Richardson.

“I have no doubt that this team will be so successful in the future, and I am just so happy Lorraine has given me the opportunity to be a part of it all.”

Next year looks even brighter to Galow, who signed an incredible 13 freshmen and a Division 1 transfer to the team. “They want to go somewhere where athletics are valued,” she said. “We are recreating our culture of winning.” She plans to build that culture by bringing alumni to campus during the season for a special weekend full of activities, anchored by the alumni meet in the middle. There will be opportunities to talk with the coaching staff and athletes, including a Sunday brunch where alums will have a chance to pass on more knowledge and culture to the current team. “Our team needs to know where they came from,” she said.

Lorraine Galow was a big part of the six National Championship banners on the walls of the Hubbell Gymnasium. Now, she has a chance to add a few more. “In 2009 when we won the first championship, we didn’t have the nice equipment or uniforms that other schools had; we traveled on a school bus to nationals instead of a nice coach bus. We made do, and that mentality sticks with me,” she said. “We have better facilities now, better equipment, but you don’t need the fancy stuff, you just need people to believe.”

That, and maybe just a little help from destiny. ■



Save the Date!

The University of Bridgeport's
Knights Fest



Join us for a weekend of exciting food, fun and festivities in celebration of our Students, Alumni, Employees and Friends!

**October 7th, 8th, and 9th
2022**

The University of Bridgeport | Bridgeport | CT