

# UB Knightlines



The University of Bridgeport

# On the Rise





# President's Line

Dear Friends,

A strong breeze blows through my bedroom window, rustling the curtains and stirring my cats. My chubby bulldog snores and dreams of bones. Looking through the window there is a light rain, the trees are bending in the wind, and I can see whitecaps on the Sound just yards away. It is

early in the morning on a Saturday in November. The quiet is calming, as the last few months have felt like life has been fast-forwarded with little time to pause and reflect upon my experience.

I have quickly come to love this University and this city. Most mornings I spend a brisk 30 minutes walking by the Sound through Seaside Park and then plunge into conversations and meetings both on and off campus. Each day has its own beauty and resonance, and I wish I had more time to record the meaningful moments that emerge on a constant basis.

From the very beginning, I've been deeply touched by everyone's kindness and generosity, and awestruck by the work ethic, commitment, and loyalty of all members of this University community. We are a proud place with a history of transforming people's futures and providing them with opportunities to make wise choices as they wend their way through their lives. Our Board of Trustees is committed to supporting the University both now and in the future and came together to create the first Frank Zullo

Endowed Scholarship for community service given to the inspiring Esther Bristol '20. This year, my priority is to be the University of Bridgeport's best student, and everyone who is part of this place is my teacher. And I've already learned a lot from everyone.

I've learned that when I accidentally lock myself out of my house at midnight, kind Officer Thompson will immediately come and let me back in (and delicately refrain from commenting upon my kitty slippers). I've learned from one of our Summer Bridge Program students that the faculty member he worked with is the most important person he has "ever known in my life." I've learned that we have just completed the most beautiful baseball field in the country, and I've learned that our Model UN program is the "turning point" in our students' lives. I've learned from Vice President for Facilities George Estrada that the University once had an eight-lane bowling alley, long since closed, located in the basement of our Student Center. I discovered after meeting alumni Lynn '83 and Michael Schneider '83 that they earned credits back in the day for bowling, and I'm glad to tell you that we will bowl again in Bridgeport, thanks to a generous lead angel donor.

I've learned that our University is a leader in higher education when it comes to the diversity and talents of our students. We are an institution where

the undergraduate student population is largely African American, Hispanic/Latino, and Caucasian. We welcome our international students who come and add their cultural and intellectual richness to our endeavors. I've learned that my administrative group is wildly talented, devoted to building an even stronger institution, and somewhat challenged as a dance team (just check out UB's Facebook page).

I've also learned after meeting with students in residence halls, forums, and during my open office hours every Friday afternoon that they are believers in the promise of the future that the University offers. In a conversation with a current senior, I learned she has taken both on-campus and online courses, is a mother to three children under the age of 12, and is carrying a 4.0 in her chosen major of business. Her goal upon graduation is to give back and pay it forward. She is my new hero.

In this beautiful issue of *UB Knightlines*, you will learn, too, about our energy, inventiveness, and ambition. We are the University on the water, and I am honored to be home here with all of you.

Sincerely yours,



Laura Skandera Trombley

# UB Knightlines

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**President**  
 Laura Skandera Trombley

**Vice President, Marketing  
 and Communications**  
 Susan Andrews

**Founding Editor**  
 Leslie Geary

**Staff Photographer**  
 Kazuhiro Shoji '99, '02

Please send address changes and Letters to the Editor to: *UB Knightlines*, 126 Park Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06604 or by e-mail to [knightlines@bridgeport.edu](mailto:knightlines@bridgeport.edu). Please include your full name, UB class year (if applicable), and contact information. For additional assistance, call (203) 576-4625.

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Cover photo by Marcus Robinson

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# Editor's Note

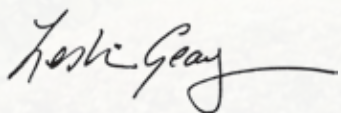
If you were among the more than 2,000 alumni who attended the 2018 Homecoming, you undoubtedly felt palpable change at the University of Bridgeport. It's not just the season—the campus is ablaze in jewel-toned trees—that has transformed the University. Athletes are playing on a new baseball field. Graduate students at the Ernest C. Trefz School of Business are taking classes in a glittering new analytics lab. Crews are busy installing windows, painting, and retrofitting Bauer Hall with offices and resources to support the much-anticipated Innovation Center.

Additional resources are only part of the University's exciting evolution. As you'll read in "University of Bridgeport on the Rise" (page 16), academic programs have been streamlined into three distinct colleges of excellence. They are the College of Health Sciences; College of Arts and Sciences; and the College of Engineering, Business, and Education. This reorganization ushers in numerous positive changes, from fostering multi-disciplinary research and inter-professional learning to returning talented faculty to the classroom to work closely with students. That's huge, judging by alumni who often attest that, more than anything, it was University of Bridgeport faculty who had a tremendous impact on their professional futures.

Yet you don't have to teach to make a difference. In her gorgeous essay, "A Perfect Metaphor for Community" on page 64, Vice President of Student Affairs Edina Oestreicher makes the case for why we all need young people in our lives—and the different ways to make that happen. Edina's piece is a must-read that will fill you with hope. Of course, so many of you already have discovered the satisfaction of getting involved. Homecoming honored many alumni—Board of Trustees member Susan Heckman O'Hara '84, OBS/BSA alumni, and the Alumni Association, among them—whose generosity sustains UB students. The 1927 Society, a new membership announced this fall, recognizes loyal donors who have given any amount for at least three of the most recent fiscal years (to learn more, please see page 33).

Others give their time and talent. In fact, as I read Edina's essay, I instantly thought about the creative collaboration between alumnus and photographer Dallas Molerin '60 and English major Emilia Rivera '20. After seeing Molerin's breathtaking photograph of a sunflower field, Rivera was inspired to write the poem "Countryside." It gives me much pleasure to publish the poem and photo together in this issue—just as I have loved showcasing hundreds of stories in *Knightlines* since its inaugural issue debuted in the summer of 2009. That makes this magazine the 25th issue—a milestone for this editor, for sure!—but just like the University, *Knightlines* will be changing, too.

So stay tuned and keep in touch. The University of Bridgeport and its students need you to share your stories, your expertise, and your powerful enthusiasm. You make us stronger, and you make us proud.



Leslie Geary  
Founding Editor



# BY THE NUMBERS

NUMBER OF FRESHMEN WHO TOOK THE PLUNGE:

200+



48

STUDENTS PARTICIPATED IN UB'S SUMMER SCHOLARS PROGRAM THIS YEAR



2,000+

ALUMNI ATTENDED 2018 HOMECOMING WEEKEND, A RECORD NUMBER



THE HECKMAN FAMILY LEGACY SCHOLARSHIP, CREATED BY SUSAN HECKMAN O'HARA '84, AWARDED A TOTAL OF

\$25,000

TO TWO UB STUDENTS IN OCTOBER

160 GOLFERS RECENTLY RAISED MORE THAN

\$135,000

AT THE UNIVERSITY'S ANNUAL GOLF CLASSIC IN SUPPORT OF CURRENT STUDENT-ATHLETES



8

LANES WILL BE REOPENED AT UB'S BOWLING ALLEY

GRAPHIC DESIGN CHAIR EMILY LARNED'S NEW BOOK HAS WON



5

AWARDS

50 MILES

MAXIMUM DISTANCE THE UNIVERSITY'S NEW STEM BUS WILL TRAVEL FROM CAMPUS TO BRING SCIENCE EXPERIMENTS AND OTHER FUN CLASSES TO AREA SCHOOLS



FONES SCHOOL OF DENTAL HYGIENE'S DAZZLING CLINIC JUST CELEBRATED ITS

10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY



Wishes and a

# Tree House

Adjunct Professor Peter van Geldern teams up with Make-a-Wish Connecticut to turn a fantasy tree house into the coolest hangout ever

By Leslie Geary



Photos by  
Jeanette Raucci

University of Bridgeport Adjunct Professor Peter van Geldern greets a visitor with a fast, “Hi! How are ya?!” before diving into the details of a tree house he’s been building all summer. It’s just up a footpath, nestled among three majestic oak trees in the backyard of a private home in Trumbull, Connecticut. Van Geldern is eager to show it off.

“It’s like a living room: 12 feet by 12 feet. We can fit a couch, a chair, a ladder, and a TV, and it feels full,” he says, leading the way to a massive tree house that, from the ground up, looks far larger than the dimensions he’s just cited.

Yet there’s no reason to doubt van Geldern: he designed the tree house.

Now, on a cloudless August morning, he’s thrilled to spend a couple of hours talking about how and why he became involved with building the tree house for a teenager he never met.

Van Geldern isn’t an architect by trade: he teaches mass communication at the University. But he’s designed buildings for years, and as he talks about his passion for construction, it quickly becomes evident that van Geldern is guided by a vision of expansive inclusivity.

“I want,” he says simply, “to do projects that make an impact.”

Whether he does this through his teaching at UB, storytelling, producing videos, designing or building structures (he’s skilled in all) is irrelevant to him. The tree house is thus an extension of his overarching mission to make human connections for positive change. So while this is the first tree house he’s designed, it is not an anomaly, he says.

“There’s definitely a thread between the collaborative processes of the projects we do at UB and my community architecture,” van Geldern says.

Fittingly, the tree house project began with a connection. It was

February 2018 when an unfamiliar phone number flashed on van Geldern’s iPhone screen. It was Make-A-Wish Connecticut, the nonprofit that makes dreams come true for critically ill young people.

Word had spread through the Make-A-Wish Connecticut network of volunteers that there was a professor at the University of Bridgeport who had a knack for building unusual structures: yurts, tiny homes, dwellings constructed with upcycled materials, and the like. That appealed to Make-A-Wish Connecticut, which had just begun working with a 15-year-old boy named Josh who was battling leukemia. Josh lived with his parents and a younger brother in Trumbull, and when Make-A-Wish Connecticut asked what he wanted, Josh said a tree house. “I wanted to feel like I was in the trees and really high,” Josh later recalled. “I wanted a place to be a kid.”

Could van Geldern design and build one?

“I told them I’d love to,” says van Geldern.

In fact, even before Make-A-Wish Connecticut called, van Geldern had leveraged construction skills to “build community.” He’s organized four barn raisings in rural Pennsylvania during which he and other volunteers erected a neighborhood social pavilion, a sawmill, and rebuilt a ramshackle 150-year-old farmstead. He’s also organized volunteer crews to build homes for other families.

Recently, he started to design small dwellings that people can potentially build on their properties as affordable, accessible dwellings for their aging parents and grandparents. And at the Westport Makers Faire this spring, van Geldern and his son Benjamin, a University of Bridgeport sophomore, temporarily erected one

*(continued on page 6)*

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**On a project like this, everyone comes together. There's a sense that this is something meaningful, and this creates so much hope.**

of their homemade yurts across the street from Brooks Brothers and invited hundreds of passers-by to come in, sit, and—as the afternoon wore on—talk with each other.

“I'm really passionate about community building,” says van Geldern. “It's a glue for people, and it creates a sense of ownership.”

When Make-A-Wish Connecticut invited van Geldern to the project, he, in turn, reached out to one of his closest contacts, an accomplished builder and artist named Jon Day, who agreed to contribute his time to the venture.

“Jon is in my space,” says van Geldern. “We're always scheming up ways to use our talents.”

Day is trained in art, boat building,

restoration, and architecture. He also leads workshops on building tiny homes and has a team of carpenters who work for him. “Jon's an artist and a builder, so he has the mindset to take this kind of project on. He has diverse skills and specialty equipment. There was a lot of sophisticated problem solving to take on,” says van Geldern.

The most immediate concern: turning Josh's wish into a viable reality.

“Josh had a specific wish to have a tree house where he could hang out, play videos with friends, and have a loft to sleep in. Everything started with the wish. Everything started with Josh. We just listened. But then I have to design the wish, and a whole team executes it,” says van Geldern,

who frequently reviewed tree house plans with Josh. “We've started to call ourselves the ‘Wish Artists.’ “

Josh's desire to have a place to hang out, for instance, meant the tree house had to be big enough to accommodate a couch, video monitor, and a mini fridge. The peak of the roof, at 14 feet high, also accommodates the sleeping loft. Plus, “going up is where all the drama is,” says van Geldern.

Then there was the issue of safety. “This is not your normal tree house. It's a livable space in the trees. It's 20 feet in the air, and there are kids up there. So you can't just go to Home Depot and grab stuff and put it together. You have to follow rules for safe-and-sound construction codes,” says van Geldern.

To make the point, he wanders over to the base of the tree house, and points up at three massive shear-strength iron rods and levers drilled deep into some of the oak trees' larger branches.

“They pivot and slide, so that allows the trees to move independently of the structure. If there's a windstorm, the branches can sway without the house getting ripped apart,” says van Geldern.

Yet it's the way van Geldern uses design that is most striking. Massive windows invite Josh to look out and feel an immediate connection to the tangle of branches enveloping the structure, like a reassuring hug. At the same time, Josh can gaze down on the roof of his parents' house, which sits just down a small hill, with a thrilling sense of being mightier than anyone else.

“Josh is definitely king of the castle,” van Geldern agrees with a knowing smile.

For a kid battling leukemia, it's hard to imagine anything more important than feeling safe and mighty, except for a connection to others. The tree house also has created the kind of caring, personal social connections



What a view! Josh in the new tree house designed by UB Adjunct Professor Peter van Geldern.



that van Geldern loves to talk about.

As he, Jon Day, and others worked on the tree house, friends and neighbors became involved, too, stopping by to watch construction unfold. Often, they brought food and water for the builders. Others offered to help store tools and materials in their garages. Bob's Discount Furniture donated a couch, chair, and bed for Josh. Bizmark Construction donated all of the building supplies.

"On a project like this, everyone comes together. There's a sense that this is something meaningful, and this creates so much hope," says van Geldern. "We saw this with Josh. When we started, he was so sick that he wasn't really present. He was kind of numb from all of the chemotherapy. But there was something about architecture he was interested in. We started talking, and you could see him really light up. He became very involved. We'd work on sketches together and meet about the design and the furniture he wanted."

Kim Smith, director of corporate and community development at Make-A-Wish Connecticut, said, "Peter's unique design and personal touchpoints along the way gave Josh so much hope and strength while he was going through a challenging time."

Josh's mother, Diane, agreed, telling one reporter the tree house had given Josh "something to look forward to. I guess it's hope, but it's so much more than that."

After a summer of work, the tree house officially opened on August 9. Everyone came, including representatives from Make-A-Wish Connecticut and Bizmark Construction. Jon Day's sister took photos. A local news reporter stopped by, too. And lots of neighbors. They ate hot dogs and ice cream.

And then, the moment they had waited for: Josh cut the ribbon



Peter van Geldern (center) with fellow 'Wish Artists' who turned Josh's dream tree house into reality.

to the structure and scrambled up its staircase. A deep blue couch sat in front of a television. His lacrosse and hockey sticks hung on the wall. Twinkling lights wound around the banister of his sleeping loft.

"I love it! I love it! It's awesome," he exclaimed as a television news team recorded his reaction. "The amount of happiness I have right now is just unreal, like, they just nailed it. Every single piece nailed. I'm just so happy!"

A few days later, van Geldern returned to the University of Bridgeport to prepare for a new semester

teaching mass communication. But he's not putting down his ruler or his hammer. Soon after the tree house was finished, Make-A-Wish Connecticut invited van Geldern to design an outdoor fort for another sick child.

He didn't think twice about saying yes.

"Doing this kind of work is about all of us coming together as a community and expressing our own gratitude for our families, our health," he says. "It's acknowledging that making contributions to others' dreams is a core part of being human." ■



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# College Credits, Plus a Lot More

**How 17-year-old David Alvarez took a UB Dual Enrollment class in high school and ended up as a University of Bridgeport freshman and the founder of a hot new apparel company**

**By Leslie Geary**

When it was time to pick classes for his final year in high school, then-17-year-old David Alvarez selected a course called Entrepreneurship because he said he wanted “to know more about business.”

He ended up with far more than newfound knowledge.

By the time the class ended, Alvarez had earned three college credits through the University of Bridgeport’s Dual Enrollment Program, which gives high school students the opportunity to take college-level classes at their Connecticut high schools. He had applied to the University of Bridgeport, thanks to encouragement from Dual Enrollment Program Director Tim Raynor, who found Alvarez to be “very coachable.” And he had learned enough about business to launch MADE Clothings, an inspirational line of apparel for young people facing adversity.

Now Alvarez is a freshman at UB, where the Entrepreneurship class he took at Seymour High School less than a year ago put him one step closer to earning a bachelor’s degree in business management. But the University is equipping Alvarez with something other than a solid undergraduate education in business: it’s given him direct access to a team of experts from its Innovation Center, Ernest C. Trefz School of Business, and Student Entrepreneur Center (SEC), who want to help him grow his apparel startup into a unique brand.

“It’s amazing,” says Alvarez. “I took the dual enrollment class wanting to learn more about entrepreneurship, then I started my business, then I enrolled at UB, and then I met entrepreneurship faculty. Everything is falling into place as one thing leads to another.”

Yet there were many years when things did not fall neatly into place for Alvarez.

When he was in elementary school, Alvarez, now 18, ran on his tiptoes, his limbs unable to move in the same easy, loping gait of his third-grade peers. As his steps became more irregular, his classmates began to bully him. After Alvarez came home from school in tears one day, his parents took him to an orthopedist, who

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**When he could barely raise his feet to climb steps and struggled to lift himself out of a chair, he went to a neurologist.**

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recommended stretching exercises and gave Alvarez boots to keep his feet at a 90-degree angle when he slept. Alvarez wore the boots to bed and stretched for nearly ten years. Yet his muscles continued to weaken. When he could barely raise his feet to climb steps and struggled to lift himself out of a chair, he went to a neurologist.

“It turned out I have SMA—Spinal Muscular Atrophy,” says Alvarez. “My muscles were wasting away.”

*(continued on page 10)*

As a result, doctors must inject a needle into Alvarez's back every few months in order to withdraw the equivalent of a teaspoon of spinal fluid before re-injecting the same amount of clear liquid medicine into his spine. The process takes approximately ten minutes, and Alvarez must remain absolutely still while the needles are inserted between the discs of his lower back.

Nonetheless, his bullish optimism is unwavering. "I'm making muscles," he says, flexing a right bicep as he rolls up the sleeve of a white T-shirt from his MADE Clothings line. "I'm getting stronger!"

Now Alvarez is using his personal experience to develop MADE Clothings. More than simple apparel, he views the line as a way to encourage other young people to overcome adversity and improve their lives.

"Young people are facing hardships. There are school shootings, depression, bullying—there's a lot of negativity for kids in high school and college. I want to change that. I want to help inspire people to do better for themselves and the world," he says. "That's the main reason I created MADE. It's for people who are overcoming challenges to make it or who have made it, despite hardship."

In a world of tweeted platitudes, Alvarez is keenly aware that his pledge could easily be dismissed as a marketing gimmick. His proven ability to rise above his personal health issues—to remain optimistic when it would be easy to fall into despair—gives him enough street cred to silence skeptics. Nonetheless, he is determined to be a living example of what his company stands for: grit, hope, and dreams fulfilled.

"Building a business is hard work," he says. "You have to be willing to do it."

When his mother and father offered to give him money to launch MADE Clothings, he politely declined and worked as a paid intern at Sikorsky Credit Union instead. "My parents already help me with so many things, and it was important to me that MADE is solely my own," he says. "I saved as much money as I possibly could and invested it into the business."

His dogged work ethic has already turned heads among University of Bridgeport professionals who frequently assist student-entrepreneurs on campus.



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**We're here to help David take the next steps to grow his business, whether that's connecting him to manufacturers or marketing pros or guiding him as he develops a business plan.**

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"David is exactly the kind of student-entrepreneur we're dedicated to helping," says College of Engineering, Business, and Education Dean Tarek Sobh. "He's directed and motivated like so many of our students, which is why we're excited to open our Innovation Center in 2019. It's the latest resource for student-entrepreneurs who currently work at the University's Student Entrepreneur Center (SEC)." (The SEC will move from its current location on the north side of campus and into the Innovation Center when it opens.)

Alvarez met faculty at the Ernest C. Trefz School of Business on a quiet afternoon at the start of the semester, when he stopped by to introduce himself to its director, Elena Cahill.

Alvarez brought a knapsack. It was filled with soft cotton T-shirts that came in black or white. Each was printed with the new MADE Clothings logo—the word MADE with a Japanese character that translates into the word "made" for the letter A.

"A lot of my peers are into Japanese lifestyle, anime, Japanese



Bauer Hall, currently being renovated, will house the Innovation Center to provide resources and expertise to student-entrepreneurs like David Alvarez.

culture; I thought this would appeal to them,” he says, pulling the shirts, the first in his clothing line, from his bag and showing them off to Cahill and other faculty. “I wanted a design that is simple but eye-catching, and I want everything to be attractive.”

Soon after the first delivery of shirts arrived this summer, Alvarez started an Instagram account to share photos of his customers. He likes that they can model his shirts, but he’s equally determined to have them post testimonials—maybe just a few words or so—about how they overcame or are overcoming challenges, along with their dreams and goals.

“I want their stories behind each photo because MADE is not just a business,” he says. “I want it to be a movement, to be authentic.”

He has little to worry about, says Elena Cahill, who founded the Student Entrepreneur Center before becoming

the director of the business school.

“David wants to inspire people who face hardships, and he can do it because he’s been there. He’s earned the right to say, ‘Don’t give up’ because he’s spent years battling a painful disease and he’s never given up! He’s reached inside himself to find strength and inspiration. He’s completely genuine,” says Cahill. “Now we’re here to help David take the next steps to grow his business, whether that’s connecting him to manufacturers or marketing pros or guiding him as he develops his business plan.”

In fact, Cahill adds, Alvarez follows in the footsteps of more than 200 other student-entrepreneurs who have founded or nurtured businesses at the Student Entrepreneur Center.

On a recent afternoon, Alvarez looks out a window of Wahlstrom Library and peers down at Bauer Hall,

the grand Victorian building that will soon house the Innovation Center and SEC. A bright yellow excavator parked outside the building looked like a child’s toy. Inside the building, crews were renovating the historic dwelling, where in coming months Alvarez will continue to grow MADE Clothings with free guidance from the University’s team of innovation experts.

“I’m going to have to move from a solo operation to having assistance with MADE, and that is going to be beneficial, especially with marketing and legal issues and finding new distributors,” Alvarez says.

Does Alvarez feel lucky about the way things are working out?

“No, it’s not luck,” he says matter-of-factly. “You make luck. If you work really hard, you’ll get rewarded, and along with rewards, a bunch of other doors will open. That’s what’s happening for me.” ■



abuzz



*with Native Pollinators*

**By Susan Andrews**





When you see plastic cups on a college campus, you might imagine that they were flung out of a car window or are remnants of a hopping weekend party. However, if you happen upon one of nine strategically placed white, yellow, or blue 2" x 3" polyurethane cups on the periphery of the University of Bridgeport campus, you have encountered an integral part of an important research project that is slated for at least two years.

"The ultimate outcome for my research is to write a guidebook informing the general public on the how and why to optimize land use in creating urban nesting habitats for native pollinators such as wild bees, wasps, flies, and butterflies," James Durrell, a 2016 graduate in biology from the University of Bridgeport, said.

Urban ecology, urban restoration,

and pollinator research have captured the attention of both scientists and the public alike. Aside from honey production, bees account for approximately one-third of the food consumed by humans. Fascinated by bees, Durrell said that "the University of Bridgeport has a unique opportunity to study the diversity and abundance of native pollinators in an urban and coastal environment."

While an undergraduate, Durrell took classes from Kathleen Engelmann, associate professor of biology. "James' project is bringing together several very interesting and topical issues, including urban ecology, the pollinator crisis, and the conservation and biology of native plants and native pollinators," Engelmann said.

Although allergic to bees, Durrell possesses a strong affinity for urban

wood, twig, and stem nesting bees that are indigenous to the region and represent 30 percent of all known bee species. Durrell said that wood, stem, and twig nesting bee species are highly abundant in Connecticut, including 73 species in eight different wild bee groups.

"It is crucial to incorporate multiple types of flora that bloom from early spring to late autumn for our local pollen producers—bumble bees (*Bombus*), sweat bees (*Halictus* and *Lasioglossum*), and the brightly colored metallic green *Agapostemon* bees (also known as sweat bees)," Durrell said. And, put on your dancing shoes because the two-spotted longhorn bees (*Melissodes bimaculata*), often called disco bees, have also been documented on UB's campus.

The plastic cup colors simulate





flower petals and are stabilized against the forces of nature due to stakes in the ground, picture hangers, and hair ties placed around the top of the cups. The colorful cups attract bumble bees, sweat bees, butterflies, flies (lots of them), and solitary wasps like the Great Golden Digger Wasp.

The contents of the cups, mostly pollinators, are gathered, sorted, and processed every two weeks from March until October. The species collected from the contents of the cups, as well as observations of native pollinators at the UB research plot, give significant insight into how humans can better change the landscape to support native pollinators.

“Another project goal for the UB research plot is to determine which native plants can make the greatest impact on local pollinator ecology,” he explained. The plant research plot contains six different cultivars of native plants in the area, including Jerusalem artichokes, giant sunflowers, elderberries, purple raspberries, swamp milkweed, and Hollow-stemmed Joe-Pye weed. These plants are of interest because their stems are hollow and have been documented in providing nesting habitats for wild bees.

Your garden in Connecticut might be adorned with beautiful ornamental plants such as purple cone flower (*Echinacea*) or hydrangeas. However, some ornamental plants, especially hydrangeas, can produce non-functional flowers as a result of interbreeding.

Durrell said that as natural areas become less prevalent, the benefits native plants provide to not only insects but also to birds and mammals are crucial in maintaining biodiversity. The plants in the UB research plot were selected because of their varying bloom times and their effect on local ecology in terms of providing habitats for insects and birds. “Planting native provides floral resources to flies, butterflies, and wild bees, which in turn provide food for other animals,” he said.

An exciting find for Durrell was the discovery of *Bombus fervidus*, a golden northern bumble bee, which has been on the decline in Connecticut and was last recorded in 2012. There are about 16 other interesting garden finds that include the beautiful Monarch butterfly as well as eggs and caterpillar offspring that feed off swamp milkweed. So far species from the *Lasioglossum* sweat bee genus have been the most abundant bee collected.

In early fall 2018 and 2019, three bee houses will be placed throughout campus with differing sized holes drilled into blocks of hardwood on a post that will accommodate the varying sizes of the pollinators. “In early 2019, we will assess the bee houses along with the dissected stems to establish an effective method for citizens to aid in promoting native bee diversity,” Durrell said.

Durrell believes that urban areas provide numerous opportunities for the planting of wildflowers and other flora in currently unoccupied parking lots and other unused spaces. “Flowers and other flora provide soft groundcover, produce strawberries and other berries for birds, and more,” he said. He added that dandelions (species from *Taraxacum*) and other common “lawn weeds” are viewed as nuisances, but they play a crucial role in providing flora resources all season long to foraging pollinators.

Durrell currently splits his time between working at UB as a laboratory instructor in biology and as a research assistant in the Entomology Department at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station. He plans to pursue his graduate studies in pollinator ecology. ■





# University of Bridgeport On the Rise

**Joining a national trend, the University consolidates an abundance of schools into three distinct colleges**

**A conversation with Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs Stephen Healey**

Soon before classes started, the University of Bridgeport announced its biggest change since the founding of the institution: a complete reorganization of its academic structure. Instead of 14 schools, the University now boasts three distinct colleges of excellence, each featuring a unique collection of programs.

President Laura Skandera Trombley said, "This will build upon the strengths of the University, enhance the student experience, promote interdisciplinary teaching, and encourage the development of new majors and programs."

Since the new structure was announced, alumni have reached out with questions. Here are answers to some of the most frequently asked queries.



### How are the three new colleges organized?

The three new entities include the College of Arts and Sciences; College of Health Sciences; and the College of Business, Engineering, and Education.

The College of Arts and Sciences includes SASD (Shintaro Akatsu School of Design), the School of Public and International Affairs, the School of Professional Studies, and programs formerly offered in the School of Arts and Sciences.

The College of Health Sciences houses Fones School of Dental Hygiene, the School of Nursing, the School of Chiropractic, the Physician Assistant Institute, the Nutrition Institute, the School of Naturopathic Medicine, School of Health Professions and the Acupuncture Institute.

The College of Engineering, Business, and Education includes the School of Engineering, the Ernest C. Trefz School of Business, and the School of Education.

*(continued on page 18)*

### Why did you undertake this restructure?

For some time we have realized that the separate school, college, and institute structures we had created would benefit from being united around core professional and strategic purposes. Peers from outside the institution as well as accrediting bodies shared views that we could produce gains by gathering related faculty groups within larger college structures, but the main reason was to signal to our constituencies that these colleges would be the main strategic foci of the University going forward. These core commitments include the range of pre-professional and professional programs in the College of Arts and Sciences, including design and public and international affairs. The College of Health Sciences demonstrates that we will continue to develop programs in this service sector of the economy, and the College of Engineering, Business, and Education is organized to teach skills and knowledge to advance those professions.

### How does the new structure benefit students and faculty?

In many ways, the student experience will be enhanced. Students are primarily concerned about their programs and their faculty, and having access to quality advising and mentoring. Our goal in forming the colleges was to create larger bodies of faculty where there would be a greater range of interaction with peers in related disciplines. We also are using this opportunity to focus attention on the quality of faculty-student interaction. As we move forward, we will continue to invest in those interactions as much as possible.



### What sorts of new initiatives will come out of the new structure?

We are building on years of effort developing interdisciplinary and interprofessional program building and grant seeking. The College of Engineering, Business, and Education is uniquely prepared to frontally address the STEM crisis, to teach business practices and acumen to engineers and educators, and to prepare students who are broadly adept in competencies required for successful careers in the 21st century. The College of Health Sciences is prepared to teach evidence-based modes of healthcare, to develop very significant interprofessional training opportunities, and to further the University's commitment to exploring integrative healthcare modalities.

### How have people reacted to the news?

The University received much positive press, and on campus the reaction was primarily one of excitement. Alumni in large measure embraced the addition and thought it enhanced our value. The development of the college structure clearly indicated to University stakeholders that a forward path had been envisioned and realized. On campus, there was also the sense that the initial step would need to be followed by a revision of practices and policies to create ones appropriate for the new structure.



**DEAN MANYUL IM, PhD**



**DEAN CAROL PAPP, DNP**



**DEAN TAREK SOBH, PhD, PE**

### **Who are the deans for each college?**

Manyul Im, PhD (philosophy), is dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. The College of Health Sciences is being led by Dean Carol Papp, DNP (nursing administration and education). Tarek Sobh, PhD, PE (robotics and automation, AI, and computer engineering), is the dean of the College of Engineering, Business, and Education and executive vice president of the University.

### **How does the new structure impact learning and research?**

Dismantling some of the administrative walls between departments means the University can more effectively nurture inter- and multi-disciplinary research and scholarship among faculty, post-doctoral researchers, and even undergraduate students whose academic and professional goals require them to be proficient in many fields. ■

## Taking the Plunge

**President Laura Skandera Trombley invites first-year students to help her establish a new University tradition**

**By Leslie Geary**

What happens when a Southern Californian moves to Bridgeport?

If it's University President Laura Skandera Trombley, she heads to the beach at Seaside Park and invites first-year students to join her.

On a cloudless and balmy Friday, August 24, Trombley and hundreds of students whooped and hollered as they ran headlong into Long Island Sound.

Several wore purple.

The exuberant event started with a competition: Trombley announced she would personally buy a year's

worth of textbooks for the freshman who demonstrated the most school spirit. Judging was conducted by Board of Trustees Co-Chair Robert L. Berchem, Athletics Director Anthony Vitti '03, and Provost Stephen Healey, who after thoughtful consideration awarded the prize to Kei-Lin Gatling.

Gatling, 19, outdid her peers by spray painting her hair purple, festooning it with ribbons, and donning UB spirit wear.

"I didn't think I was going to win," said a happy but surprised Gatling after

the event. "It makes a big difference. I'll be working to pay for school, and books are really expensive. It's amazing that the president gave freshmen an opportunity to win books."

Other students were equally thrilled with The Plunge.

"When you come to a new campus, you are lonely," said Muhammad Arshad of Pakistan. "So this is a perfect time to make friends. Also, the weather is perfect!" ■



Student Kei-Lin Gatling '22 (above) won a year's worth of textbooks from University President Laura Skandera Trombley for showing her strong school pride during The Plunge.



# Green Heat

**University of Bridgeport teams up with Dartmouth, MIT, and the University of Rochester to pilot cheaper, environmentally friendly ways to fill its energy needs**

**By Shereen Jegtvig**

The University of Bridgeport has installed an environmentally friendly district heating system as part of a project aimed at decreasing the carbon footprint of university and college campuses in the U.S.

The project, called the “Livable Campus: Americanizing European Hot Water Technology,” is being held in conjunction with Dartmouth College, MIT, the University of Rochester, and Ramboll Foundation, a Danish think tank focusing on sustainable communities.

District heating is relatively

unknown in the United States, where steam heating is more common, despite its inefficiency and cost.

The systems are composed of water pipes that connect to a power source, which produces heat as a by-product. That presents an opportunity for the University “to continue its efforts to reduce its carbon footprint as a campus devoted to staying green,” said David Cote, executive director of facilities, planning, and operations.

Buildings connected to district heating systems have devices called heat exchangers that transfer heat from the hot water network to their own hot water systems. The additional heat means less energy is needed to heat the water that warms the buildings. After passing by the heat exchangers, the water in the network pipes goes back to the power source, where it is reheated and the cycle continues.

At the University of Bridgeport, the power source is a fuel cell on University Avenue that provides electricity for Wheeler Recreation Center and the University Place Apartments. The district heating network was connected in the spring of 2018 and will feed heat

into the University Hall heating system when outside temperatures drop and boilers that heat the building kick in.

“This will be the first winter that we see the avoided costs of heating at University Hall, the University’s new dormitory. So, I’m very anxious,” said Cote. Nonetheless, he added that he expects the system to be a “home run” with roughly a 50 to 60 percent optimization of the excess heat that comes from the power cell.

Does that mean more heat could be available for future projects? Maybe.

According to Cote, the district heating network could be extended by adding a pipe underneath University Avenue that would service the heating system that’s currently shared by Chaffee and Cooper Halls, two of the older dormitories on campus. But for now, the focus of the Livable Campus study will be on University Hall.

Students and staff who live and work there won’t notice anything different from any other type of heating system, according to Cote. “The process doesn’t have any effect on thermostats and there’s nothing that residents need to do differently,” he said. ■





# Bringing Machines to Life

**Can University of Bridgeport engineers harness machine learning to create an emergency-response robot that thinks on its own?**

**By Leslie Geary**

In a laboratory on the University of Bridgeport campus, a pair of engineers waits patiently as a whirring 3-D printer guides melted filament into something that looks a lot like the head of a kid's Transformer toy. Later, when the printer comes to a halt and the cooling filament solidifies into hard plastic, the two will insert miniature camera lenses into the head's vacant eye sockets.

The lenses, five megapixels and 1.8 millimeters in circumference, are about one-tenth the size of lenses found in a typical digital camera. Nonetheless, they are part of a powerful project involving the fast-evolving fields of machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI).

"It's a race," says Adham Baioumy, showing off the head he's just pulled from the 3-D printer. "We want to build

the first fully autonomous humanoid."

Baioumy is a mechanical engineering major from the University of Washington, but he's come to Connecticut to work with UB engineering research postdoctoral fellow Ahmed El-Sayed, PhD, to develop a next-generation robot.

The robot looks as personable and helpful as it is designed to be. In fact, El-Sayed and Baioumy are mulling over its name.

"Either 'HERO' for Humanoid Emergency Response Operator—"says Baioumy.

"—or 'HORUS,' for Humanoid Operated Response for Unmanned Search," finishes El-Sayed.

In any case, if all goes well, HERO/HORUS is destined to save lives and

take other actions during fires, floods, or other disasters. That's not entirely unique. Emergency responders have deployed drones, robots, and other disaster technology for years. After Hurricane Irene in 2005, for instance, robots equipped with cameras located victims stranded on rooftops. The problem? Control systems sometimes fail. "There are robots, but they are remotely controlled over a server," El-Sayed explains.

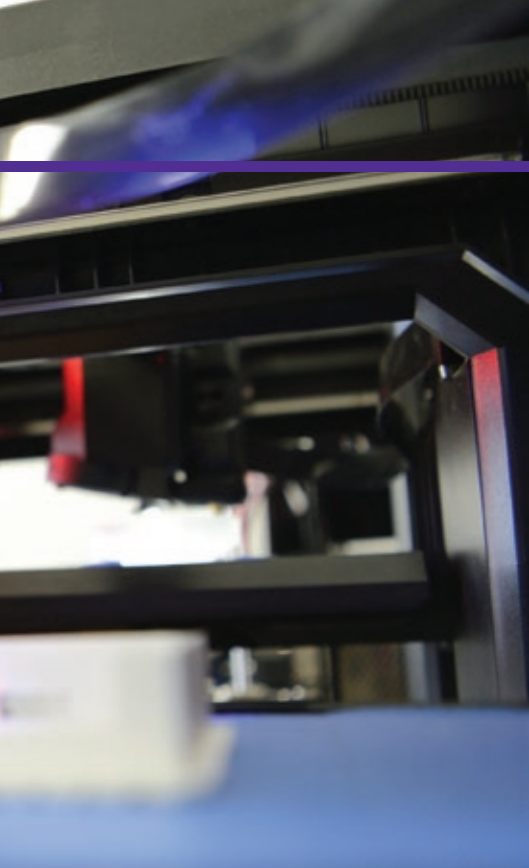
That's where El-Sayed and Baioumy hope to create disaster technology that is truly revolutionary. Instead of worrying about control systems, the two are engineering a fully autonomous humanoid designed to move, adjust, and think independently.

"We want it to work entirely on its own," says El-Sayed, "like a human."

Consider their design. The robot's multijointed legs bend in eight places. "That gives it a higher degree of freedom so it can climb stairs and go through other difficult terrain without getting stuck. If it's a wheeled vehicle, it won't be as nimble," says Baioumy.

Its head, now fresh off the printer,





Professor Ahmed El-Sayed and visiting student Adham Baioumy work on HERO.



swivels left to right at 180 degrees. Rotator cuffs and ankles turn a full 360 degrees. Lobster-like pincers grab and hold objects a tad more clumsily than a human hand.

Engineering and building the robot's hard, moving parts is relatively easy. Developing its intangible decision-making capabilities, however, involves exploration in the areas of AI and machine learning. Those fields, filled with engineering pioneers, rely upon

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“**Emergency responders have deployed drones, robots, and other disaster technology for years. The problem? Control systems sometimes fail.**

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algorithms to acquire, sift through, and process data before independently predicting outcomes without the assistance of human hardcoding.

“It's thinking,” sums up El-Sayed, who is programming hundreds of algorithms that will run an ARM core processor and a modern neural chip that acts as HERO's brain core.

El-Sayed cites an example. HERO/HORUS is stuck in a burning room and runs up against glass. Based on data retrieved from sensors, such as the miniscule lenses affixed to its eyes, the processor determines that the glass is a barrier. Data then is relayed to the neural processor, which determines that HERO should try to find a way around the barrier or break it. When the window breaks, oxygen is added to the fire. Sensors send data to the processor, which determines the fire has increased in size. But it's not until this data reaches the neural processor that HERO might learn that breaking a window in a fire can be a bad choice.

That scenario may sound like a sci-fi movie, but it is coming in the foreseeable future, says Tarek

Sobh, PhD, PE, UB's executive vice president and dean of the College of Engineering, Business, and Education.

“Humanoid robots are eventually going to replace manual labor altogether. Many organizations are working toward replacing humans with machines, even within the academic arena,” says Sobh.

At Boston Dynamics in Massachusetts, for instance, engineers have created SpotMini, an autonomous robotic dog that opens doors. Creating a HERO/HORUS capable of performing not one but numerous independent, rational, and split-second decisions “will require giga—if not tera—bytes of data and hundreds of algorithms,” says El-Sayed.

“A human can easily determine when to break a window—say, if there's a need to save a life. For the robot, it will require large amounts of data, training, and design scenarios that will help the machine train on its own. Eventually, several generations of autonomous humanoid robots would be developed based on contextual learning,” El-Sayed continues. “This is a long-term project.” ■

## Peace Music

**Tyler Suarez wrote a song in honor of a loved one killed at the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting**

By Leslie Geary

Tyler Suarez was 13 years old when his aunt, Dawn Hochsprung, the former principal of Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, CT, was killed trying to save students from a school shooter.

Reeling in shattered disbelief on the night before Hochsprung's funeral, Suarez recalls how he and his grandfather, Joseph Cyr, began writing a song to help them both "try and understand what happened."

"I remember being in a hotel room, not knowing what else to do but cry. We started scribbling ideas on napkins

and notebook pages," said Suarez, who began playing the guitar when he was 4 and who is now a 19-year-old music education major at the University of Bridgeport. "That not only helped bring my family together in a time of despair but led to the creation of 'Little Princess,' the song that I feel continues my Aunt Dawn's legacy."

Nearly six years following the Sandy Hook shooting, Suarez shared his song with the world to serve a larger purpose: fighting gun violence.

On October 5, "Little Princess" dropped on an 11-track album called *Raise Your Voice! The Sound of Student Protest*. The next day, Suarez joined other students on the album in San Francisco for a live performance of "Little Princess" at the Hardly Strictly Bluegrass Festival.

Released by the nonprofit Little Village Foundation, *The Sound of Student Protest* features Suarez's song along with a selection of pieces written and performed by students from Parkland, FL, and other parts of the country.

Proceeds from the album will support the nonprofit organization Everytown for Gun Safety.

In an early review, *Billboard* music critic Gil Kaufman said *Raise Your Voice!* gives students "an opportunity to have their voices out there and to encourage other students to rise up. These students just want to keep our schools safe, and we feel this music will have the potential to strike at what's going on in America." ■



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**I remember being in a hotel room, not knowing what else to do but cry.**



# Digging Data

## The University expands its business analytics program

By Leslie Geary

The Ernest C. Trefz School of Business has launched an online version of its popular Master of Science in Analytics and Systems and opened an analytics lab to support the master's program.

The University first offered the MS in Analytics and Systems in the fall of 2017, but in the past year, the program has become one of the school's most popular graduate tracks, preparing students to work in quickly growing fields like business analysis, data analysis, systems analysis, project management, and more.

Fahad Mahbub '18 began working at Norwalk, Connecticut-based Potoo Solutions as a data analyst after earning his MS in Analytics and Systems earlier this year. "I was hired to do analytics work but I transitioned into IT operations, so knowledge in this field can open doors to many systems-related jobs," he said. "At UB you have time, you have opportunity, you have space to learn and grow."

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, analytics and systems employment will increase 21 percent through 2024. Potential average salaries range from \$50,000 for workers who

don't have anyone reporting to them up to \$125,000 or more for leadership positions.

The MS in Analytics and Systems offers several options to accommodate students' schedules and career goals. The 30-credit degree can be completed in 12-24 months. Courses may be taken entirely online, on campus, or both. Students can also earn a dual degree that combines the MS in Analytics and Systems with an MBA. The program has a STEM designation per Department of Homeland Security guidelines.

The program is run under the direction of Mike Lohle, PhD, a senior lecturer at the Ernest C. Trefz School of Business.

"The growth of our on-campus MS in Analytics and Systems has been impressive, and it's thrilling to see our graduates land exciting jobs as business analysts, data and market analysts, project managers, dashboard developers, and business-intelligence analysts, among other roles. This new online program positions us to help even more students reach their career goals," Lohle said. ■



Analytics Senior Lecturer Mike Lohle with student



Alumnus Fahad Mahbub '18. After graduating with an MS in Analytics and Systems from the University in 2018, Mahbub was quickly hired as a data analyst.

## Super Dwellings

### SASD students' homes for the disabled win top prizes

By Leslie Geary

For the second consecutive year, students from Shintaro Akatsu School of Design (SASD) have won three out of four awards at the Visitability Home Design Contest, an annual competition that challenges aspiring interior designers to create dwellings for people with disabilities.

The contest was sponsored by Independence Unlimited, a center for independent living based in Hartford.

All entries were judged by Melinda Otlowski, owner of Accessible Design Consultants, a division of Halcyon Architects LLC of Southington; Antonia Ciaverella of Tecton Architects in Hartford; and Edward Mambruno, ombudsperson for the Connecticut Department of Developmental Services in Hartford.

SASD students Laura Jara-Rivera and Djiba Kourouma, both sophomores majoring in interior design, won the \$250 First Place prize.

Third Place was awarded to SASD students Olivia Kascak and Rachael Watcke.

A third team of SASD design students from the University of Bridgeport, Rose Vilay, Justin Goodson, and Tiany Hicks, won Fourth Place.

Independence Unlimited Spokesperson Sue Salters explained that the "Visitability Home Design Contest offers a unique opportunity to bring together student home designers, their teachers, contest judges, and our consumers who use mobility

devices to start the conversation about the need to create more accessible housing opportunities. We need to be building homes for everyone."

Competing in the contest provided the first opportunity for winners Jara-Rivera and Kourouma to collaborate on a project. The two shared a vision to design a dwelling "that would make a resident feel safe and at home," said Jara-Rivera.

"Our approach was to make space," added Kourouma. "It's hard for people to move when they're disabled, so there's not a lot of doors [in the proposed house]. We lowered countertops and included a place where someone could sit to fold clothes in the laundry room. We had an open

office space; basically they can roll into it [in a wheelchair]. Doorways are four feet wide . . . We put our blood and sweat into the project, but the night before it was due, I started feeling pretty good about it."

SASD Interior Design Chair Marsha Matto, who advised all of the University of Bridgeport students who competed, was equally pleased.

"What is most impressive about this win is that Laura and Djiba competed in their sophomore year. They are dedicated to understanding the need for more ADA housing as our population ages in place. Their understanding of using design-thinking to solve problems has never been more acute," Matto said. ■



From left: Interior Design Chair Professor Marsha Matto with award-winning students Djiba Kourouma and Laura Jara-Rivera



# UB engineering student at Nasdaq Opening Bell

**Kayle Chapeton and other members of the Society of Women Engineers helped kick off trading at the electronic exchange**

**By Leslie Geary**

All eyes were on University of Bridgeport student Kayle Chapeton '20 on August 8, when she attended the Opening Bell ceremony at the electronic exchange known as the Nasdaq.

Chapeton, who is earning a BS in Electrical Engineering, was invited to attend the morning event as a member of the Society of Women Engineers (SWE) UB chapter. To share in the excitement, Chapeton took over the University's Instagram account, posting live updates as she made her way to Times Square, where The Naz is located.

More than 3,300 stocks trade on

the Nasdaq exchange, and most are in high-tech—think Apple, Microsoft, and Netflix. That prompted Chapeton to remind Instagram followers why SWE was helping to launch the day's trading.

"Keep in mind that only 13 percent of engineers in the field are women, and that's not even going into smaller percentages when it comes to women of color, Native Americans, and people of Asian descent," she said. "So SWE is a great society for people to join because it is a really large advocate for women in engineering."

Chapeton attended Opening

Electrical engineering major Kayle Chapeton '20 back on campus after visiting The Naz in Manhattan on August 8.

Bell with SWE leadership, including CEO and Executive Director Karen Horting, President Jonna Gerkin, board members, and engineering students who are members of SWE at other Tri-State colleges and universities.

"Engineering can be tough for women, so it was great to meet everyone," Chapeton said after the visit.

Founded in 1950, SWE's global membership includes 40,000 professionals working in roughly 100 engineering- and tech-related sectors, and 300 college sections throughout the U.S. and Puerto Rico. ■



# Harvesting Ideas

**Undergraduates put their research on view at Wahlstrom Library**

**By Leslie Geary**

Nuclear fusion that powers the sun could theoretically provide endless clean energy on Earth, too. Yet fusion remains a Holy Grail of sorts: around the world, and on projects costing billions of dollars, scientists are working to mimic fusion, in which light nuclei at temperatures of millions of degrees collide to produce new heavier nuclei with attendant release of energy. But they haven't figured out how to achieve the condition of energy break-even, in which the energy output equals the energy furnished to enable the process.

University of Bridgeport math major Issa Dababneh and his adviser, mathematics and physics Professor David W. Kraft, are equally intrigued by fusion. This summer, they performed theoretical studies focused on an alternative, smaller-scale means of fusing nuclei.

"Other research works at very high temperatures that copy the conditions of the sun. Our research is a different process, where we start with a plasma of deuterium nuclei at room temperature and compress it in such a way that as its temperature rises, the energy is retained internally," said Dababneh. "As a result, we're reaching high temperatures and that tells us that nuclear fusion is occurring."

Added Kraft, "The theoretical studies yielded several surprising features whose details have yet to be worked out, and we hope to accomplish this in the near future."

Given the widespread fascination with fusion, it was not surprising that their research attracted plenty of interest in early September. That's when it was exhibited at a research poster fair held to culminate the 2018 UB Summer Scholar Program, an annual University initiative that encourages undergraduate research.

The pop-up exhibition, held at the Wahlstrom Library, attracted approximately 300 guests who reviewed the research posters and chatted with the 48 Summer Scholars who presented them. Each of the scholars had collaborated with UB faculty members throughout most of May and June, and their research delved into subjects ranging from physics to psychology.

"The research poster exhibit celebrates the remarkable milestones that our undergraduate student researchers

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**Given the widespread fascination with fusion, it was not surprising that their research generated plenty of interest.**

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and faculty achieved in just a short time,” said Director of Undergraduate Research Jessica Nelson. “Two of the research projects have already been accepted for publication by peer-reviewed journals and three projects will be presented at national and international academic conferences. Other research remains ongoing. Both the depth and breadth of our students’ research are truly impressive.”

Students Mirlange Baptist and Tiffany King stood in front of a poster detailing data that they are using to create a lab experiment that can be integrated into the Chemistry 103 curriculum. Advised by Assistant Professor of Chemistry Natalie Romano, the two friends focused on creating a fun, educational experiment that can be used to clearly explain thermodynamics.

“The [heat of neutralization] experiment we did in Chemistry 103 was confusing. I really didn’t like it,” said Baptist, a biology major.

“The lab did need some updating,” Romano agreed diplomatically. “So we sat down and threw out ideas and talked out this type of experiment.”

They came up with a project that examines how much heat transfers to four different kinds of salts from water. Though the experiment needs some fine-tuning, Romano said she plans to use it in future Chemistry 103 classes.

School of Nursing Assistant Professor Linda Tampellini, RN, DNP, was pleased that her research may one day directly affect students at the University, too. She and health sciences major Renae Barret began researching literature on college students’ knowledge of nutrition. The research, which is still ongoing, aims to find out if

students, especially those with chronic diseases, have enough information to make smart dietary choices.

“If we find there’s a lack of knowledge, I want to develop a plan to get information to UB students so they know what should be part of their healthy nutrition plan,” Tampellini said. ■









Photo courtesy of  
Dallas Molerin '60

# Countryside

by Emilia Rivera '20

Lingering kisses upon your skin,  
Sounds of pleasure draw me in,  
Oh the sweetness you brought me then,  
My lovely Caroline.

We ran all day,  
We ran all night,  
I will never forget how  
I grabbed your hand  
And held on tight;  
You never once left my side.

Drowning in the reminiscence  
of memories both big and small,  
That day, then and there, I gave you my all.  
Your crimson red hair  
So long and so fair  
Dancing like leaves in the sunflower air.

The golden field with its unspoken rhymes  
Is our one true home;  
I never want to sleep alone.  
You are my wife,  
I've given you my life,  
My lovely Caroline.



From left: University of Bridgeport Board of Trustees Co-Chair Robert L. Berchem, President Laura Skandera Trombley, Esther Bristol '20, Lesley Zullo, and Mrs. Frank N. Zullo

## Board of Trustees Establishes the Frank Zullo Endowed Scholarship

**Unanimous gift from trustees honors the late chairman of the board**

In honor of the late Frank N. Zullo, the University of Bridgeport Board of Trustees has unanimously established the Frank Zullo Endowed Scholarship with a gift of \$51,500.

Zullo served as chair of the Board of Trustees for 27 years until his death on May 26, 2018. The newly created scholarship will be awarded annually to a University of Bridgeport student who is dedicated to service, is in good academic standing, and has demonstrated a financial need.

On October 5, the Board of Trustees awarded the first Frank Zullo Scholarship to student Esther Bristol '20. Bristol, a biology major from Brooklyn, is a member of the University's Emerging Leaders Program, the Gospel Choir Society, and numerous other programs. ■

# The University's Longest-Giving Donor

**The University's new 1927 Society recognizes alumnus Russ Van Billiard '51 and other steadfast donors**

Russ Van Billiard earned his bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Bridgeport before joining the U.S. Navy, where he designed submarines for 35 years. Now retired and living in Portsmouth, NH, Van Billiard remains committed to service. His loyal generosity extends to the University of Bridgeport, where he has made a donation every year since 1982, longer than any other living alumnus.

“ There are a number of things from my past that I feel very close to. Many of the people I went to school with were part of the GI Bill. The GI Bill experience was wonderful; we were helping these people, and they went on to make something of themselves. I give in memory of them as we were the second engineering class to graduate from UB that was a full four years.

**Russ Van Billiard '51**  
1927 Society Donor, 36 years



Russ Van Billiard in the U.S. Navy and today.



## Be University of Bridgeport Loyal!

**Consecutive donors can join Russ Van Billiard as members of the 1927 Society**

With its new 1927 Society, the University of Bridgeport recognizes donors who have made gifts for each of the three most recent fiscal years. Their steadfast loyalty year in and year out ensures that the University remains true to its mission of opening doors of opportunity for talented students.

Current membership in the 1927 Society is maintained with yearly gifts of any amount to the University in support of its students.

In recognition of their ongoing support, 1927 Society members will be invited to a private reception with President Laura Skandera Trombley, Provost Steve Healey, and deans in the spring of 2019.

To make a gift, go to [give.bridgeport.edu](https://give.bridgeport.edu). To find out more, please contact Director of Development Arielle Purcell at [apurcell@bridgeport.edu](mailto:apurcell@bridgeport.edu) or 203.576.4542.

Focus On:

# David Salinas

Interviewed by Leslie Geary

David Salinas is a serial entrepreneur whose passion for innovation was largely inspired by his father, a Peruvian immigrant who later developed a small real estate portfolio in New York and Florida, and by his earliest experiences working as a restaurant busboy.

In 2002, the year he graduated from the University of Bridgeport with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, Salinas joined a startup marketing agency, where he oversaw development. In 2006, he left to co-found Digital Surgeons, a full-service brand-development and digital marketing company, with Peter Sena. Now recognized as one of the most preeminent privately owned agencies in the country, Digital Surgeons has won the coveted Webby Award and was named a Top Ten Agency for Startups in 2013. Salinas and his creative teams have delivered award-winning campaigns across a variety of industry categories for clients like Lady Gaga and United Technologies.

In 2017, Salinas stepped aside to serve as CEO of District, a New Haven

real estate development/technology incubator/entertainment complex located in a former Connecticut Transit bus garage. The nine-acre site focuses on spurring technology and innovation while creating workforce development and educational programs around technology-talent initiatives and entrepreneurial support. In addition to its offices and 18,000-square-foot coworking space, District features a fitness facility, river trail, kayak launch, restaurant with a beer garden, and amphitheater.

Salinas recently started the District Innovation and Venture Center, a nonprofit that is incubating innovative education and workforce-training programs. He also serves on the Connecticut Innovation Council for U.S. Senator Chris Murphy and the Board of Directors for Make-A-Wish Connecticut.

In October 2018, the University of Bridgeport awarded him a "Rising Star" Award, given to exceptional alumni under 40.

**Latest accomplishment:** In February 2018, Salinas opened the first phase of the District. Tenants include Digital Surgeons, Spheregen, Biorez, Mindtrust Labs, Drive Cowork (with nearly 200 members and 30+ businesses), an Innovation Center, and The District Athletic Club (Fitness Center, CrossFit, Yoga Studio, Spin Class and Personal Training Facility). District will continue to open more spaces in the coming months, including the Holberton School, a college alternative that trains software engineers at scale in less than two years. It opens in January 2019.



**Is it true that you got your start as a pitch-man when you worked as a busboy at 12?**

My very first job was as a busboy at an Italian restaurant in Queens, New York. Because I'm naturally curious, I needed to understand the mechanisms of the restaurant and how my pay worked. I realized I earned a percentage of the waitstaff's tips, so I inquired how the tips worked. They told me that tips were typically a percentage of the check. So I asked, "How do you increase the size of the check?" They told me by selling specials or selling bottles of wine. Within a week or so I saw an opportunity to sell wine, and I pitched it to a couple that was eating. "Would you like to buy a bottle of wine for the lovely lady?" and the

guy bought it. It could have been the combination of the fact that I was a cute kid or put the guy on the spot in front of the woman or he was thirsty, but I went back to the waitstaff and told them, "I just sold a bottle of wine." They promoted me to waiter soon after because I was able to sell. During that time I made more money than most people I knew, including some adults. Minimum wage was around \$4 and change, and I was taking home \$75- \$100 a night in four to five hours.

**You were able to ask the question, "Do you want a bottle of wine?" Is that the mistake people make, not asking the question?**

Yes. People are afraid to ask hard

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**People are afraid to ask hard questions because they believe they're intrusive.**

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questions because they believe they're intrusive. I learned that from my father. My father was born in Peru and came to the U.S. when he was 16 years old. He worked as a superintendent for a residential building in New York; it was a union job that didn't pay well. In the mid-1990s he went into real estate on a very small scale. He used to drive around and he would go to people's houses where there was a 'For Sale' sign and, without a broker, he would insult them: "This house isn't worth the selling price." And he would give them a lowball offer. He used to embarrass me. "Why do you do that?" I asked. He told me, "What's the worst thing that can happen?" He began to buy apartments and houses, and renovate and rent

*(continued on page 36)*



them. Later, he would flip them. But that's what he taught me: "What's the worst thing that can happen if you ask the question?" You'll get a no. Rejection and failure shouldn't bother anyone.

**Favorite marketing campaign you've done?**

From a creative perspective, the Gaga Workshop with Lady Gaga. It was incredibly creative with lots of innovative tactics. We used platforms in different ways or new platforms that people hadn't heard of yet like Foursquare. We had a variety of incredible elements that made it such a vast success. The results were great. That's not always the case; campaigns can be creative but not deliver results.

**Webby Awards limit speeches to five words; what was yours?**

"Ideas are nothing without execution." It's actually on our District coffee cups now.

**Finish the sentence: Last time I pushed myself out of my comfort zone I . . .**

. . . raised \$5 million in 5 ½ weeks for my nonprofit, District Innovation and Venture Center, which is opening an education center that will house Holberton School and the U of Next that will provide education and workforce training to help the region with building talent. The talent will help businesses and have an economic impact on the state.

**Accomplishment you're most proud of?**

My family. At the end of the day, family comes first. I found an incredible partner in my wife Katie. I've got a 9-year-old daughter who's very bright and ambitious, and I've got a son on the way. The best thing I can put forward is good people.

**With the District, you're investing in New Haven as a center for technology. Can your model be brought to Bridgeport or other cities in the state?**

The District is less about where it is and more about what it can do. The District is a connector, it's a media hub, it's a community of communities that allows collisions that result in personal and professional connections. Those connections will naturally lead to more economic impact. It builds hope and energy for place. So the answer is yes, I can and plan on bringing it to other cities, especially in the Northeast.

**You've said Connecticut should focus on 33- to 45-year-olds who aren't leaving the state versus recent graduates, who are. Are we forgetting older entrepreneurs?**

Of all the different demographic categories, when we're talking about age, the only cohort that does not bleed out of Connecticut as fast as other cohorts is the 33- to 45-year-olds.



### That said, what is your advice for student-entrepreneurs?

First, let's piggyback off the conversation about 33- to 45-year-olds. Younger people tend to believe they don't get along with or relate to older people. And older people tend to have a specific bias toward younger people. Older people of a certain generation often say, "Oh! Millennials!" I hear it constantly.

My business partner, Pete Sena, wrote a great article about bridging wonder with wisdom, and it details that people should think differently about this topic.

The people I get along with most have always been older than me—wiser—and I can just sit and listen to them all day. They have little quotes they know—one of my first advisers taught me: "Fast nickels are better than slow dimes"—that make you think. In life and business there is a need for a combination of wonder and wisdom or youth and age. Embrace it.

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**I was never the typical student. I spoke out in class. I never followed the case studies and directions.**

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The other advice I would give to student-entrepreneurs is I think that self-awareness is the most important thing that they can build. They have to be on a constant quest to understand

who they are and why they are and be on a quest to improve. The man I was in college is not the man I am today. If you charted my growth, it would look like a steep upward hill. Young people want to rush. They have false ideas of what's real. It's OK to be optimistic, but if you are realistic and have self-awareness, you'll get a lot farther.

Lastly, when building a business, hire slow and fire fast. Trust me!

### Why UB?

My brother was going there for chiropractic school and asked me to take a ride with him to do some paperwork. At the time I had a yearning to leave New York, so I applied on the spot, and they accepted me.

UB was pivotal for me. Two things stand out as life-changing for me. First and foremost, I met one of the greatest people in my life: Tim Springstead. He was a student from Staten Island, and we couldn't have been more different. I was a street kid and a knucklehead with bad grades throughout high school. He was on an academic scholarship and had gone to a private academy his whole life in New York. We became great friends and helped each other grow as people.

The second person who influenced me was Professor [Robert A.] Schaff. He was a marketing professor and an old ad man from the crazy ad men days. He allowed me to be me. What I mean by that, I was never the typical student. I spoke out in class. I never followed the case studies and directions, and he applauded me for it. He told people I would be successful. He believed in the way my brain worked and encouraged my out-of-the-box thinking. I changed my major from biology to business as a result. ■

The reason why is that Connecticut has a great quality of life. It's a great place for families. The focus has been trying to develop cities for young people. But young people have less responsibility to stay in a particular place and more of a yearning to explore the world—the concept of leaving the nest. In my case, my nest was New York City. I found Connecticut to be a great place for me. If we were to shift focus as a state and illuminate and promote what we're good at and own what we are, a great place for families with a high-quality life, we'll be a success.

Thirty-three- to 45-year-olds have higher spending power. Their parents will likely stay around because they want to be around the grandkids, and I believe from an entrepreneurial perspective, there is more wisdom. Therefore, older entrepreneurs tend to be more successful. There are more older entrepreneurs than the random Mark Zuckerberg. And there would be no Mark Zuckerberg without older experienced people: Sheryl Sandberg for example.

# Faculty Lines



The STEM on Wheels team (from left): Tarek Sobh, Ruba Deeb, Sarosh Patel, Manyul Im, Nancy DeJarnette, Julie Demers, and Trinadh Venna

## STEM on Wheels

Area students can design a tool for an astronaut, learn to code the motions of a small robot named “Dash,” or learn to retrieve and interpret satellite data by contacting satellites, just by boarding a very special bus.

On November 1, the University unveiled STEM on Wheels, a mobile laboratory for learning and exploration and Connecticut’s first STEM bus. Conceived of by College of Engineering, Business and Education Dean **Tarek Sobh**, STEM on Wheels became reality thanks to a UB team led by Director of Biomedical Engineering **Ruba Deeb**. **Nancy DeJarnette**, a director at UB’s education program, designed the vehicle’s participatory, hands-on curriculum. It will be taught to students in kindergarten up through 12th grade.

Connecticut Health & Educational Facilities Authority awarded \$75,000 to the University to retrofit a former bus that was donated by Greater Bridgeport Transit (GBT). NASA, the Connecticut Space Grant Consortium, and Kubtec Scientific also helped rev the STEM bus into action. It is now making its first rounds to Bridgeport schools and will expand its route 50 miles beyond Bridgeport in 2019.

## Jeffrey Johnson Cues Up

**Jeffrey Johnson** may no longer direct the Music Department (he’s now an associate dean at the School of Arts & Sciences), but as a prolific and much-renowned music critic, he’s still turning listeners on to the marvels of Mahler, Schumann, Benny Goodman, and, well, whatever music suits his fancy.

A few weeks into the new semester, Johnson prepared for a 2018-2019 season of guest appearances that promises to be busier than ever. In October, he hosted a special “Evening at the Opera” on WMNR, where he’s produced and hosted on air for 15 years. Then he was off to deliver the first of four pre-concert lectures he’s prepared for the Greater Bridgeport Symphony Orchestra. Next stop: Fairfield University, which for years has invited Johnson to present its ongoing

Met Opera Live in HD transmissions.

“Those are really popular,” says Johnson. “They’re sold out. They’d follow me into the classroom if they could.”

No wonder. Johnson warms the audience up—and gets younger audiences interested in classical music—by keeping his talks innovative.

When not making live appearances, Johnson covers classical music for the *Hartford Courant*, the *Boston Globe*, and other leading media outlets. The author of four books on music, he earned his BA from Ithaca College, an MA from Eastman School of Music, and a PhD in Musical Composition from Boston University.



- L.G.



## Got Rap?

What's the difference between college music programs and the Pulitzer Prize committee?

Judges for the prestigious prize embraced rap music when they awarded Kendrick Lamar the 2018 Pulitzer Prize for Music. Colleges have yet to catch up, says **Frank Martignetti**, PhD, director of music and performing arts at the University.

"Most colleges are still ignoring 70 percent of the most popular music in the world. They're focusing on classical and jazz almost exclusively," said Martignetti. But the University of Bridgeport "has a long history of being more forward-thinking," he adds.

In 1971, it offered one of the country's first formal jazz education programs, and current music majors can hone their skills while specializing in the blues, world music, and hip hop—along with required classical and jazz offerings.

Now Martignetti is researching ways in which music colleges can serve student musicians who want to focus on rap music. He began his work after teaching Josh Brewster, a dual music



and business major who graduated from the University in May 2018.

"Josh is a rapper who came to us having already started his own record label. Throughout his college career, he grew his skills and released two more rap albums and toured the East Coast," says Martignetti. "He was a real inspiration, and he will continue to impact how we teach and advise students with a strong interest in rap. When he was here, we added more coursework and equipment to our music technology curriculum, and we're hoping to continue to build that portion of the program."

Additionally, Martignetti wants to encourage other college music programs to embrace rap. Recently, he presented his paper, "A Case Study of a Rapper in a Bachelor of Music Program," at the Association for Popular Music Education's international conference in Nashville.

"A lot of schools are asking what to do with students like Josh," says Martignetti. "They are curious what best practices look like in teaching these students. We can be a forward-thinking example of what that might look like."

- L.G.

## Focus on Fall

Poems have been written about them. Photographers travel for miles to capture them. Tourist sites throughout New England bank on them. Fall's colors—auburn, lemon-yellow, russet, and brick—never fail to dazzle, so it's not surprising that waiting for the leaves to turn invites speculation. Will fall be fabulous or, well, sort of meh?

To find out, news reporters turned their cameras on Associate Professor of Biology Dr. **Kathleen Engelmann** during a series of particularly rainy

days at the end of September.

"Sunshine helps to break down that chlorophyll," Engelmann told viewers. "So will cool temperatures. As you can tell today, rain can often bring slightly warmer weather, so those two things will slow down the process."

In other words, you can't have color without cold, Engelmann concluded. So before heading off to photograph the splendors of fall, pack mittens along with your camera.



- L.G.

# Faculty Lines

## Getting the Word out About the UN

**Thomas J. Ward**, University of Bridgeport vice president for internationalization who served for nearly two decades as dean of the School of Public and International Affairs (formerly known as the College of Public and International Affairs), was recently elected director-at-large and a member of the governing board of the Committee on Teaching about the United Nations (CTAUN).

Founded in 1996, CTAUN partners with the UN Department of Public Information in supporting United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI), which works with a worldwide network of universities, including the University of Bridgeport. Its annual conference for students and educators is held at

the UN headquarters in Manhattan and “involves the support and presence of key UN leaders,” Ward said.

Ward has worked with CTAUN since 2012 and has served as chair of its annual poster contest that is held at the United Nations headquarters in Manhattan.

“In my new role, I hope to connect to the next generation of educators through a CTAUN outreach campaign to schools of education in the Tri-State Area,” Ward said.

The University of Bridgeport has held official NGO status under the United Nations Department of Public Information since 2012.



- L.G.

## Auditing Performance Reviews



How well a company performs impacts a host of factors, from its potential for risk to its profitability. But can investors and business owners be sure that companies are being evaluated?

Department of Technology Management Chair **Elif Kongar** doesn't think so.

“Performances of businesses are measured by auditors based only on pre-defined quantitative factors—most notably efficiency. So if you're talking about a restaurant franchise, they may look at timeliness of deliveries or the number of customers,” Kongar says.

The catch, she continues, is that “models that focus solely on quantitative criteria avoid the interrelations and dependencies between qualitative and quantitative measurements, and they tend to eliminate historical performance

“

**Can investors and business owners be sure that companies are being evaluated?**

data. That can lead to inadequate performance evaluations.”

Now Kongar is leading a team of researchers, including engineering graduate student **Gazi Murat Duman**, to create software that companies can use to more thoroughly evaluate their operational performance. In addition to incorporating traditional quantitative data, the software will incorporate input from managers, employees, or owners.

- L.G.

## Nursing School 2.0

Healthcare providers have acquired their skills through simulated learning—from role playing to caring for mannequins—since World War II. But these days, simulated nursing education tools have become a lot more sophisticated. Students enrolled in School of Nursing programs at the University of Bridgeport, for instance, train in a Simulation Learning Lab, where lifelike robotic mannequins and virtual and augmented reality simulate patient symptoms and hospital-like environments.

Yet knowing how to best utilize these next-generation teaching tools often requires more technical expertise than currently exists at many nursing programs, says UB College of Health Sciences Dean **Carol Papp**.

“Although there is a general agreement that integrating simulation

technology into nursing curriculum is essential, there is currently no documented educational approach for preparing faculty to expertly operate and manage differing types of simulation technology,” Papp says.

To bridge the nursing-tech divide, Papp, a widely regarded leader in nursing education, collaborated with UB nursing program faculty member **Christine Booth**, DNP, RN, medical measurement consultant **Tina Freilicher**, and School of Engineering faculty **Ruba Deeb** and **Ahmed El-Sayed**. Their goal: to create a pilot nursing education curriculum that involves engineers to support nursing educators.

For one year, Deeb and El-Sayed, along with other robotics engineers from the University, worked with Papp’s nursing staff to seamlessly operate

and maximize the performance of simulated nursing education tools, including high-fidelity mannequins used at the Nursing School’s BSN program. At the same time, more than 100 engineering students followed the healthcare simulation class to boost their understanding of the field.

“The study demonstrated that incorporating engineering expertise into the nursing program ensured that the Nursing Simulation Learning Center operated at its fullest capacity,” says Papp.

That, in turn, resulted in several other positive results, from supporting research to boosting efficiency at the lab. The results of the pilot, “Bridging medical simulation with computer science and engineering: A growing field of study,” appeared in *Nurse Education Today*.



From left: Carol Papp, Ahmed El-Sayed, Christine Booth, and Ruba Deeb

- L.G.

# Class Notes



**1978**

**Dan Lewis** reports that “thirty-nine and a half years after earning a bachelor’s in marketing from UB,” he received an MBA from the University of West Georgia, where he is the founding director of the Center for Business Excellence. He also earned a black belt in Six Sigma in 2012 and is currently working toward earning a black belt in Lean Six Sigma. He and his family live in Carrollton, Georgia.

**2008**

Third-grade teacher and School of Education alumna **Elizabeth Hosking** was recently named 2018–19 Watertown School District Teacher of the Year. Her success is no surprise to those who know her. While earning her master’s in elementary education at the University, Hosking was named Intern of the Year. She currently teaches at Judson School in Watertown, where she serves on the Judson School Sunshine Fund Committee and is one of the school’s representatives to the Watertown Education Association. Judson School Principal Kathy Scully lauded Hosking’s “unwavering care for children.”



**2008**

**Jaquel Patterson**, ND, MBA, has been named president of the American Association of Naturopathic Physicians. She is the first University alumna and the first person of color tapped for the presidency.

“Part of my role is being involved in policy decisions on the national level: getting Medicare inclusion, expanding licensing to all 50 states. Another push for me is to have more successful graduates after they finish their programs,” said Patterson. “At some point, I’d love to collaborate with the School of Naturopathic Medicine to create more clinical shifts for UB students in the community.”

Patterson grew up in a family of doctors who encouraged her to attend medical school. “The traditional route wasn’t the right fit for me,” she said. When Patterson found out about the School of Naturopathic Medicine, she was “thrilled, especially because it’s one of the only programs on the East Coast.”

After graduating from UB, she worked in private practice and as a senior healthcare administrator, most recently serving as vice president of operations and compliance at Community Health Resources in Windsor, Connecticut. “I picked up an interest in community health while volunteering at UB and received the Service Leadership Award. Working with patients and seeing their transformation is my life passion.” She currently runs an integrative medical practice in Fairfield, Connecticut.

**2009**

After 20 years working as a Certified Public Accountant, **Barbara Oxe**r swapped careers to become a teacher, obtaining both an MS in Elementary Education and a Sixth Year Certificate in Educational Administration and Supervision from UB. She’s dazzled ever since. Earlier this year, the Connecticut PTA awarded her the Outstanding Assistant

Principal of the Year Award. Oxe

r was just named assistant principal for Glenville School after serving as Cos Cob School assistant principal since 2012, when she was named as Distinguished Teacher by the Greenwich Distinguished Teachers Awards Committee.



**2010**

**Ali Baker** holds both an undergraduate and graduate degree from the Ernest C. Trefz School of Business (MS Finance, MBA '12). In May, he added a PhD in Information Systems when he graduated from Nova Southeastern University. Baker has worked for AT&T since 2012, where he has earned a series of promotions, most recently Area Retail Sales Manager. His former Trefz professors say, "Congratulations, Ali!"



**2011**

After graduating from the School of Professional Studies (formerly IDEAL), **Denise M. Newton**, LCSW, writes that she enrolled in Fordham University's online Master of Social Work. "I became part of the second cohort for this new program offered entirely online. I graduated from Fordham in February 2015. My first job in my new career was as a therapeutic social worker in specialized foster care with the Family and Children's Agency, where I am still employed. In November 2015, I was promoted and currently supervise a staff of four master's-level social workers. In February 2018, I established a private practice, also located in Bridgeport, and I am currently pursuing a PhD in Human and Social Services with emphasis on family studies and interventions at Walden University."



**2017**

The Connecticut Association of Reading Research has awarded **Jennifer Sinal**, a graduate of the University's Doctorate in Educational Leadership program, with its Wirth-Santoro Award for Literacy Research. The prestigious prize provides a \$1,000 grant to encourage and support advanced-studies research in literacy instruction by promising scholars.

"I was quite humbled when I received the news, and I was thrilled to present [my research] to the Association," said Sinal, who was recently named director of secondary literacy and learning for the Fairfield Public School District.

Sinal's research helps teenagers apply new literacy skills outside of specialized tutoring sessions.



Rising Stars (from left): Angelica Castillo '10, Erik David Barber '05, Mendel Murray accepting on behalf of Jessie Jones '16, Dr. Robert Brody '14, and Alicia Robinson '07, '08.

# Seven Receive Rising Star Awards

**The Alumni Association shines the light on young alumni who make an impact**

The University of Bridgeport Alumni Association honored seven alumni with Rising Star Awards during Homecoming Weekend.

Rising Star Awards are presented to young alumni under 40 who are making extraordinary contributions to their communities, professions, or the University. This year's winners are Vincencia Adusei '02, '05, Erik David Barber '05, Dr. Robert Brody '14, Angelica Castillo '10, Jesse Jones '16, Alicia Robinson '07, '08, and David Salinas '02.

"It is incredibly exciting to see our University of Bridgeport alumni flourish as this group of Rising Stars has done," said Aimee Marcella, interim vice president of university advancement. "We're thrilled to honor these young talented men and women. Their talent, drive, and contributions enrich so many."



Mark Chudwick '77 makes a point during a lively discussion about the current state of news at the *Scribe* Alumni "Almost Annual" Reunion on July 21.

## Recalling their heyday at the *Scribe*

**Journalism alumni reunite on campus this summer to remember their UB education and what it means in an era of fake news**

**By Joseph Diorio '78**

Back in the 1970s, just about anyone who worked for the *Scribe*, the University of Bridgeport's campus newspaper, knew their stuff when it came to current events. They were a well-informed generation.

About two dozen former *Scribe* scribes were on campus July 21 for the latest "Almost Annual" *Scribe* reunion, a gathering of former *Scribe* reporters that began over a decade ago as an informal get-together and chance to catch up with classmates. This year, the University hosted the gathering, providing an informative tour of the campus and dinner on the

front porch of Cortright Hall. During a wide-ranging discussion, *Scribe* alumni showed they still can hold their own.

Fake news? "It's a political term thrown about to deflect attention from news someone in authority doesn't like," said Ken Best '73.

"It's Breitbart; it's memes on the Internet; it's InfoWars. It isn't your local newspaper, radio station or any source you can verify," said Maureen Boyle '78.

Are reporters within their rights to be offended when politicians and elected officials refer to them as "the enemy of the people"? Yes, absolutely. "We are the people," said Rose V. McIver '73.

"Fake news has become the term politicians and others use to describe reporting that contains facts that paint them in a bad light. The term is used to disparage the media's efforts to dig for the truth as they perform their role of keeping citizens informed about the actions of the people they have elected," noted Janet Waldman '76.

The late Bob Viellette, managing editor of the *Waterbury Republican-American* in Connecticut, taught many of the alumni. His obit carries the following quote, which is a lasting lesson for any journalism student or practicing professional who must separate fact from fiction: "Take nothing for granted."

"We were taught by people who worked in the business; people who got their hands dirty," said Best. The group fondly remembered instructors like Viellette, John Riley (*Norwalk Hour*), William Ahearn (Associated Press), Alan Schoenhaus (*Bridgeport Post*), and the late Howard Jacobson, who chaired the journalism program. Affectionately called "HoJo" by Schoenhaus, Jacobson was remembered as someone who demanded students' best effort. Overall, the group agreed that those instructors could be taskmasters,

but they were all credited with forging young journalism students into successful news professionals.

"There I was at *60 Minutes* as an associate producer and I am surrounded by graduates of Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and Columbia," said Jill Landes '75. She said her education from UB's rigorous journalism program well-prepared her for such a demanding job.

Alumni Barbara Puffer '72 and

Dottie Simons '78 were credited with starting the *Scribe* reunions and keeping them going. ■

*Ed. Note: Joseph Diorio '78 majored in journalism at the University of Bridgeport and is a proud former staff writer for the Scribe. More than 4,000 journalists and editors currently subscribe to his monthly newsletter, "A Few Words about Words."*



From left rear: Janet Waldman '76, Jill Landes '75, Mark '77 and Susan Chudwick (and seated) Ken Best '73 and Audrey and Jack '76 Kramer



From left: Chris Bell '79 and his wife Joan Bell catch up with Kathy M. Katella '79.

Music and Performing Arts Director Frank Martignetti, Susan Sauerwein '78, '81, '87, and President Laura Skandera Trombley at the piano dedication in honor of UB's late music director W. Earl Sauerwein







The brothers of Alpha Gamma Phi



Skip Rochette '70 traveled from Canada to attend Homecoming.

# A Homecoming for the Records

**More than 2,000 University of Bridgeport alumni returned to campus for the 2018 Homecoming**

**By Leslie Geary**

It was a weekend for remembering and looking forward, a time to revive favorite programs and to start new traditions as the University of Bridgeport celebrated 2018 Homecoming Weekend from October 5-7.

President Laura Skandera Trombley, who assumed office on July 1, 2018, and senior staff kicked off the three-day extravaganza by dancing for delighted students at a boisterous Pep Rally. Twenty-four hours later, thousands of dollars in scholarships were awarded at an elegant UB Awards Dinner. Cherished alumni and faculty were honored for their innumerable contributions to the University. Bridgeport Mayor Joseph P. Ganim stopped by to proclaim October 5 to be "Fones School of Dental Hygiene Day" in the city. More than 2,000 alumni, a record number, returned to campus, some after many decades.

And bowling is making a comeback at the University of Bridgeport.

That news delighted alumni Lynn '83 and Michael Schneider '83. The New Jersey couple married after meeting on campus more than three decades ago, their courtship blossoming during an early morning bowling class that they took to fulfill a physical education requirement.

"We missed out on billiards, so we took bowling. We got up at 8 a.m. and went," Lynn Schneider said.

"We got a credit for it," added Michael.

The Schneiders were among hundreds of alumni, parents of current students, and faculty who gathered to listen to Trombley give her first State of the University Address, during which she unveiled plans to crowdfund the reopening of UB's long-shuttered, eight-lane bowling alley at the John J. Cox Student Center.

"I've never seen so many people

*(continued on page 48)*

President Laura Skandera Trombley and senior staff kicked off the 2018 Homecoming pep rally with the Cupid Shuffle. Recorded and shared, the video quickly went viral.



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**The revived bowling alley is part of a campaign to expand opportunities for students to become more deeply involved.**

excited about bowling!” Trombley said.

The revived bowling alley is part of a campaign to expand opportunities for students to become more deeply involved, Trombley said. In November, the University became the first college in Connecticut to provide electric scooters for students and the community to use, whether to zip across campus or along the beach pathway at Seaside Park.

Trombley’s address was the first time that many alumni saw the University’s new president in action.

“I really like her. She apparently cares about the students—not just their futures, but where they are now. She seems very genuine and very real,” said alumna Laura Sauerwein, ’78, ’81, ’87.

Sauerwein’s own connection to the University of Bridgeport and its students runs deep. Her late husband W. Earl Sauerwein served as the University’s music director from 1953 to 1987. The couple also lived on campus for years, attending “every single recital, every concert, every theater production,” Laura Sauerwein recalled.

On October 5, the University and Earl Sauerwein’s former students

and friends dedicated a grand piano in his name. It is located in room 110 at the Arnold Bernhard Center, where Sauerwein, an accomplished tenor, led the University of Bridgeport Concert Choir and the UB A Cappella Choir for decades.

“I am humbled by this beautiful day and loving gesture dedicated to my dear husband Earl,” Laura Sauerwein told those who assembled for the dedication. “I am sure he is watching from heaven and is humbled, as well! He loved and lived for his students.”

Director of Music and Performing Arts Program and Conductor of the University Singers Frank Martignetti said, “Earl built an incredible choral program here. We’re proud to build on his legacy of dedication to students today. It has been a joy to get to know Laura in the past year. Her love for her husband and concern for UB students—her energy, humor, and passion—are inspiring.”

Other alumni and friends have also demonstrated their commitment to the University, and the UB Awards Dinner was an opportunity to celebrate them, as well.

University Trustee Susan Heckman O’Hara ’84 recently established the Heckman Family Legacy Scholarship, and moments after O’Hara presented \$12,500 scholarships each to seniors Shawn Page and Carly Sherlock—the first students to receive the Heckman Family Scholarships—O’Hara was honored with a Distinguished Alumni: Leadership in Philanthropy Award.

Organization of Black Students/Black Student Alliance (OBS/BSA) alumni also were honored with a Distinguished Alumni: Leadership in Philanthropy Award for revitalizing the MLK Jr. Scholarship for African American students at UB. The OBS/BSA alumni will award their MLK Scholarship during the University’s annual MLK Day of Service in January 2019, when UB students honor the slain civil rights leader by volunteering throughout Greater Bridgeport.

“The generosity of these alumni is not only impactful but makes what I do every day so worthwhile. These scholarships will help propel our students along their academic journeys and remind them of their connection to the University’s extended and



Sigma Pi fraternity members returned to campus for the first time in 25 years.



Bridgeport Mayor Joseph P. Ganim delighted Fones School of Dental Hygiene Director Marcia Lorentzen '76, '01, '11 (center) by proclaiming Oct. 5 to be "Fones School of Dental Hygiene Day" in the city.

welcoming community of alumni," said Director of Development Arielle Purcell.

The UB Alumni Association awarded its annual \$10,000 scholarship, too. Former athletes were inducted into the Athletics Hall of Fame, young alumni under 40 were recognized with Rising Star Awards, and seven were presented with Distinguished Alumni Awards.

Homecoming was also a chance to prepare for future student success.

"Here's what I want," Trombley told alumni during her State of the University Address. "Support the Annual Fund because it goes to students who give me hope every single day . . . Volunteer to be a mentor, whether that's through job-shadowing, an internship, or meeting them for coffee. Be involved."

Trombley's message of participation pleased Karen and Tim Suoucy. The couple drove from New Hampshire to attend Homecoming with their daughter, Madeleine Beaujouan, a freshman majoring in interior design. The president "definitely demonstrated a strong path forward," said Karen, as her family enjoyed lunch under the UBiergarten tent. "That's why we had our child come to the University." ■



Omega Psi Phi brothers celebrate the award won by the Organization of Black Students/Black Student Alliance for Leadership in Philanthropy.



President Laura Skandera Trombley and Board of Trustees Member Susan Heckman O'Hara '84. O'Hara recently created the Heckman Family Legacy Scholarship, which awarded \$25,000 to students during the UB Awards Dinner.



Above: Alumni Board Member Dennis Brotherton '86 greets graduate students at the Health Sciences Happy Hour.



# Health Sciences Gathering



Associate Dean Michael Cioffi mingles with chiropractic alumni.

# Baseball Day

It was a great day at the ballpark for UB alumni and Alumni Association Board of Directors President Ramon Peralta Jr. '93, waving to friends.



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## New Job? New Grandchild? Moved?

The University of Bridgeport wants to know what you've been up to, and so do your classmates!

Keep in touch at  
[knightlines@bridgeport.edu](mailto:knightlines@bridgeport.edu)

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## Attention Proud UB Alumni

You know firsthand the benefits of the University of Bridgeport experience.

Lead the way for new UB students by referring them to  
[bridgeport.edu/admissions](https://bridgeport.edu/admissions)

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## ***Our daily lives have to be a satisfaction in themselves: The Bloodroot Book***

**Alder & Frankia / 2018**

**By Emily Larned**

*Our daily lives have to be a satisfaction in themselves: The Bloodroot Book*, by micropublisher and graphic design Chair Emily Larned, charts 40 years at Bloodroot, the iconic feminist vegetarian restaurant, bookstore, and work collective in Bridgeport. Larned edited, designed, hand-bound, and printed the book using risograph printing techniques to reproduce photographs from Bloodroot's archive in evocative hues of soft burgundy. Essays by the restaurant's founders Selma Miriam and Noel Furie chronicle both the personal and the political. ("Now sometimes folks ask, 'How are your precepts different from humanism, or environmentalism, or animal rights?' and we say, 'We may have much or all in common, but we came to these decisions from our understanding of feminism.'")

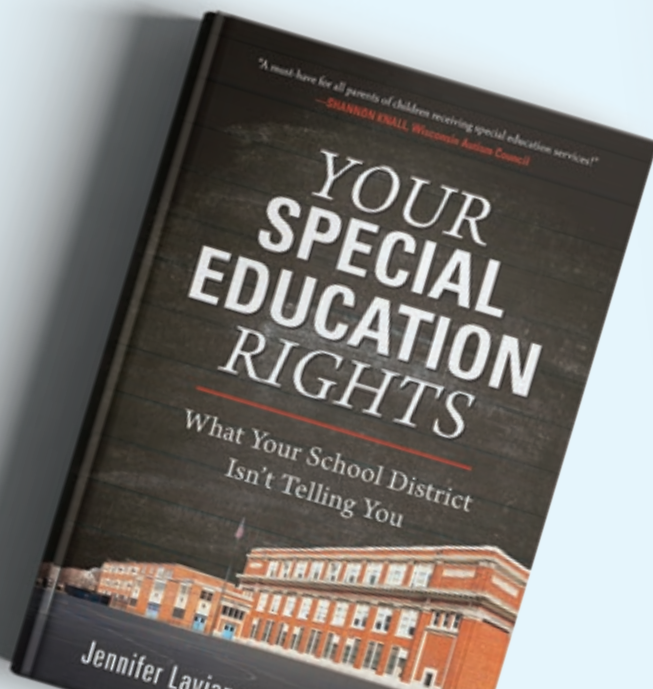
Called "a small, perfect book rich in ideas and experiences, and one where form and function are inseparable," *The Bloodroot Book* was named "The Best Book of 2017" by the literary website *The Endless Bookshelf*. Released in limited edition in October 2017, the book quickly won top honors from AIGA (50 Books | 50 Covers), the Type Directors Club (World's Best Typography), and Connecticut Art Directors Club (Gold Award in Book Design and the Spirit of Creativity Award). A second edition will be available in the fall of 2018 at [emilylarned.com](http://emilylarned.com).

## ***Your Special Education Rights: What Your School District Isn't Telling You***

**Skyhorse Publishing / 2017**

**By Jennifer Laviano and Julie Swanson '82**

Parenting a child with special needs comes with its own set of challenges. Chief among them: getting public school districts to provide services that children with disabilities need. UB alumna and special education advocate Julie Swanson teams up with attorney Jennifer Laviano in this practical guide. With humor and clarity, they demystify the special education process to help parents and other caregivers navigate such things as IEP and Section 504 meetings. More critically, they shed light on the legal rights of public school students with disabilities and how to advocate for them successfully.

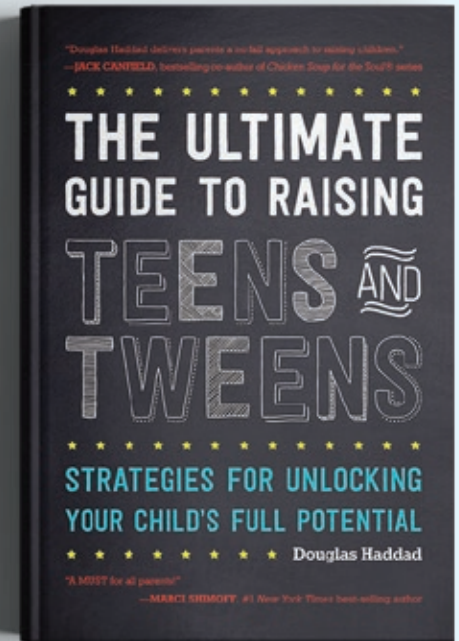


## ***The Ultimate Guide to Raising Teens and Tweens***

Rowman & Littlefield Publishers / 2017

By Douglas Haddad '10

Alumnus Douglas Haddad's latest book, *The Ultimate Guide to Raising Teens and Tweens*, should come as a relief for anyone worried about a young person. Haddad, a longtime middle school teacher who was recently named District Teacher of the Year in Simsbury, Connecticut, is a frequent guest expert on parenting and education issues for various radio and television programs. Haddad is also a nutrition counselor (he earned his MS in Human Nutrition at UB) and family coach, who helps parents and children in a variety of situations. A pro at answering and anticipating questions, he's filled his book with helpful case studies, exercises, up-to-date resources, and practical advice divided into two parts: "Ten 'Child Unlimited' Tools for Unlocking Your Child's Potential" and "Ten 'Child Limiting' Challenges to Be Aware of and How to Best Handle Them." Haddad is straightforward about perennial areas of concern and newer issues, from study habits to eating disorders, depression and suicide, technology abuse, and synthetic drugs that may be unfamiliar to readers. But like the best of teachers, he gives readers the confidence and tools to "iMotivate," empower, and connect to their kids.



## ***Quotable New Englander: Four Centuries of Wit and Wisdom***

Globe Pequot Press / 2018

Edited by Eric D. Lehman

New Englanders are a talkative bunch, or so asserts UB Associate Professor of English Eric D. Lehman in this entertaining anthology of quotes. From Emily Dickinson to John F. Kennedy, New England's sons and daughters have long held forth on topics ranging from the landing of the *Mayflower* to the Internet. Lehman's compendium brims with satire, humor, hope, and wisdom: "Baseball is the only field of endeavor where a man can succeed three times out of ten and be considered a good performer," (Boston Red Sox outfielder Ted Williams). "Liberty trains for liberty. Responsibility is the first step in responsibility," (W. E. B. Du Bois). "Nothing so needs reforming as other peoples' habits," (Mark Twain).

*Reviewed by Leslie Geary*





At the 19th Hole with Bridgeport Mayor Joseph P. Ganim, President Laura Skandera Trombley, and Paul Antinozzi, AIA, a major longtime sponsor of the UB Golf Classic and member of the UB Board of Trustees.



## UB Athletics Golf Classic a Hit

**Golfers raise more than \$135,000 for the Purple Knights**

**By Leslie Geary**

An enthusiastic group of players hit the links for a perfect day of fun and fundraising for the University's 22nd Annual Athletics Department Golf Classic on September 24.

A total of 140 golfers teed off from the Race Brook Country Club in Orange, Connecticut, raising more than \$135,000, a record amount, to support the University of Bridgeport athletics program. Over the last several years the proceeds from the UB Athletics Golf Classic have gone towards several renovation projects.

"The success of this tournament would not be possible without the generous support of our over 45 sponsors, including our title event sponsor Antinozzi Associates and all of our major sponsors and participants. This has become our staple fundraising event in the Athletics Department, and on behalf of the University of Bridgeport and our Athletics Department, we would like to thank everyone for their support!" said Athletics Director Anthony Vitti '03. ■



UB Board of Trustees Co-Chair Robert L. Berchem, Esq., and President Laura Skandera Trombley with a fellow golfer



# From Panama to the Park City: Men's Soccer's Leandro Avila Makes His Mark

**From playing on the Panamanian National Teams to leading the Purple Knights in scoring in 2018**

**By Ava Gambardella**

University of Bridgeport junior Leandro Avila has always been the center of attention on the soccer field. At four years old, he found himself beginning a journey in the sport in Panama City, where there was a great amount of competition among all players.

Between the ages of four and 14, Avila moved from one elite club team to the next, quickly gaining the skills to get him recognized. The first club he was recruited for was a U-17 reserve team, The Cyclones, at just 14 years old. Although he was always on the younger side of his team, that did not stop him from being a standout. After two years, Avila was recruited by a U-18 team, Chorrillo, as a 16-year-old. Two years later, Leandro was called up to play for Panama's U-18 National Team.

"It's beautiful to play for your national team," said Avila. "All of your family and friends watching you, you feel proud."

By playing for the Panamanian National Team, Avila has done something that many young girls and boys dream about: putting on a uniform to represent their country. In February of 2017, Leandro scored the game-winning goal for his country in a CONCACAF Group Stage match against the United States' National Team.

Although Avila found himself playing with elite teams throughout his entire life, the level of play on



the international stage was far different than anything he was used to. "The U-18 and U-20 National Teams are very different; it's all of the best players from the country and putting them all on one team," said Avila.

In November 2017, it was time to leave the U-20 national team and head to college, as he arrived in the United States to play soccer at Iowa Western Community College, a two-year school. After graduating from IWCC this past May, Avila, through his school advisor, was put in contact with four-year school soccer coaches from across the U.S. and eventually chose the University of Bridgeport.

"I loved talking with Bridgeport coaches. The school with its academic programs and location felt like a good fit for me, plus I feel comfortable with my teammates and enjoy the ability to play on a great pitch like Knights Field," Avila said.

Since arriving in the Park City, Leandro has made an immediate positive impact on the Purple Knights' program, leading the team in scoring through the first month of the 2018 season with five goals and three assists for a total of 13 points. In September, he earned the Purple Knights' Male Student Athlete of the Month.

What comes next? Avila has a ready answer: he has dedicated his life to soccer and does not intend on stopping anytime soon. ■

## A Night to Remember at the Athletics Hall of Fame

**Honoring those whose records and contributions continue to strengthen UB athletics**

**By Chuck Sadowski**

On Saturday, October 6, former Purple Knights were honored for their outstanding contributions to the athletics program as they were inducted into the 2018 UB Athletics Hall of Fame.

Inductees included: Alex Popovich (Men's Soccer '69), Linda Velaj (Women's Soccer '10), Wolfgang Woischke (Men's Soccer '72), and the 2013 Women's Gymnastics Team. Jeff Bieder '68 received the Fran Bacon Award for Lifetime Achievement in Coaching, and Paul Antinozzi was honored with the Purple Knight Shield of Merit Award.



### FRAN BACON LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT & COACHING AWARDEE

This year's recipient of the Fran Bacon Award for Lifetime Achievement in Coaching is **Jeffrey Bieder** '68, who has coached for over 50 years in high school and college athletics. After playing basketball and graduating from UB's Arnold College in 1968, Bieder enjoyed a standout coaching career that saw him win 77 percent of his games while posting 543 victories from 1968 to 2002. Famous for using the full court press, Bieder won three New York City Public League championships during his time on the sidelines. He was named the New York State Coach of the Year in 2001 and was chosen Man of the Year in 2002 by the NYC Coaches' Association. As head coach at Hunter College for four seasons, he led the Hawks to four consecutive CUNY Championship Tournament appearances. In 2013, Bieder was inducted into the New York State Basketball Hall of Fame.



### PURPLE KNIGHT SHIELD OF MERIT AWARDEES

The Purple Knight Shield of Merit is given at the discretion of the University of Bridgeport Hall of Fame Selection Committee to a person or persons who have shown exceptional commitment to the Purple Knights' athletics family. The recipient of this award may or may not be a graduate of the University of Bridgeport. The 2018 Purple Knight Shield of Merit was awarded to **Paul Antinozzi**, president of Antinozzi Associates. In addition to serving on the University of Bridgeport Board of Trustees, his firm Antinozzi Associates has been a proud title sponsor of the annual UB Athletics Golf Classic for the last five years.

## ATHLETICS HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES



The **2013 University of Bridgeport Women's Gymnastics Team** made history, becoming only the second non-Division I program to earn a spot in the NCAA Regionals. It won the program's fifth consecutive USA Gymnastics Collegiate Team National Championship and captured the program's fifth straight ECAC Division II team crown. The team won an impressive ten meets during the magical 2013 campaign with their only regular season losses coming in dual meets against Division I powers Ohio State and Arizona State, plus a second-place finish at the University of Maryland Invitational.



**Alex Popovich '69** helped propel the men's soccer team to NCAA appearances in 1966 and 1967 as he earned All-America, All-New England League, and All-New England Coaches Team honors. During his University career, Popovich netted 31 goals and eight assists for a total of 70 points, putting him seventh on the all-time goals scored list and number ten in all-time points. He is also a member of the Rutgers Newark Athletics Hall of Fame and the inaugural class of the Ukrainian Sports Museum Hall of Fame.



**Linda Velaj '10** is one of the most dominant women's soccer players on offense in the history of the East Coast Conference. Standing at number two on the all-time UB women's soccer goals scored list with a total of 60, Velaj added 18 assists to finish her Bridgeport career with 136 total points. She helped guide the Purple Knights to NCAA appearances all four seasons she was on campus, ECC regular season titles in 2007 and 2009, and a conference championship tournament crown in 2009.



**Wolfgang Woischke '72** helped guide the men's soccer program to NCAA national tournament appearances in both seasons he wore the Purple and White. He was selected to the 1970 New England Intercollegiate Soccer League All-Star Squad and was named to the NCAA's All-England team. In 2006, he served as senior executive of the World Cup in Germany. He is a member of the Mitchell College, Port Washington High School, Connecticut Soccer, and New England Soccer Halls of Fame.



## New Coach for Women's Basketball and Cross Country Teams

**Janie Mitchell brings a wealth of Division I coaching experience to the Park City**

**By Chuck Sadowski**

Janie Mitchell is the new head coach of the Purple Knights' women's basketball and cross country programs. Mitchell comes to Bridgeport from Stony Brook University, where she has served as the Seawolves' assistant women's basketball coach and recruiting coordinator since May of 2016.

Prior to her time on Long Island, Mitchell served in the same position for three seasons at Kennesaw State University in Georgia.

Said Director of Athletics Anthony Vitti, "We welcome Janie with a great deal of enthusiasm to the University of Bridgeport and our athletics department family. She's been a winner both as a coach and as a student-athlete throughout her stellar career in basketball. I think she is just the right person to move our programs ahead at all levels."

"I'm excited about the challenge of coming to an outstanding institution and athletic program like the University of Bridgeport," stated Mitchell. "I thank the Bridgeport administration and Athletic Director Anthony Vitti for allowing me this outstanding opportunity to take the next step in professional development that I truly feel I'm ready for. I'm ready to hit the ground running and help take the Purple Knights to the next level."



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**I'm excited about the challenge of coming to an outstanding institution and athletic program like the University of Bridgeport.**

Along with her time at Stony Brook and Kennesaw State, Mitchell has NCAA Division I coaching experience at her alma mater, Georgia Tech, and Jackson State. She also spent one season on the bench at NAIA power, Southern Polytechnic State University.

Named the 2004 State of Mississippi Gatorade Player of the Year and an Adidas and Nike All-American at Callaway High School, Mitchell went on to be a standout All-Atlantic Coast Conference student-athlete at Georgia Tech from 2004-08, leading the Yellow Jackets in scoring (16.4 ppg)

and rebounding (6.3 rpg) as a senior. She became the 22nd player in school history to reach 1,000 points and the 15th to finish her career with 1,000 points and 500 rebounds. A three-year captain and Dean's List student, she completed her career at Georgia Tech with 1,422 points and 704 rebounds. She was named All-ACC honorable mention in 2007 and third team All-ACC in 2008. The Atlanta Tip-Off Club named her the Georgia Player of the Year in 2008.

Following her stellar collegiate career, Mitchell played one season professionally in Rousse, Bulgaria, for Dunav Econt. She was the first American female athlete to play basketball in Rousse, and she also took part in the WNBA's Sacramento Monarchs' training camp.

Mitchell earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Management from Georgia Tech in 2008. ■

# Side Lines





# NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

Spectacular. Exhilarating. Proud. Bold.  
Bridgeport Bold.

**By Susan Andrews**

The word is out. You have probably heard that the University of Bridgeport women's soccer team has just won its first NCAA Division II National Championship in the institution's history.

The University of Bridgeport community cannot suppress its overwhelming excitement and pride in its newest champions. The stunning victory shines brightly on the University where students learn and live by the seaside.

UB was among the more than 250 teams nationwide that began practice in August, and one of the 58 teams that took part in the NCAA Championship Tournament.

"It's a fantastic feeling to win a national championship for your alma mater. Two decades

of endless work, three presidents, three athletic directors, over 200 student-athletes, and countless families and friends have supported and joined me in believing in this vision of bringing a national title back to UB," said head coach Magnus Nilerud '99.

Even with winning three of the last four regional titles and making two appearances in the Final Four during that same time frame, the odds seemed stacked against the Purple Knights' securing this year's national crown as they faced a formidable and undefeated competitor in the final.

But Nilerud believed that there was something

*(continued on page 62)*



different about this season. “Going into the deeper part of the NCAA tournament, there was an aura about the team that was very relaxed. You could almost feel something special brewing,” he said.

And clearly his insight was spot-on. Not to be daunted by the seemingly impossible, the team approached the finals with heart, a sense of purpose, and a type of energy that people always dream about bottling for pivotal life moments.

“The players’ talent, hard work, and brave hearts, along with excellent UB coaching from Magnus and his staff, won the day,” said President Laura Trombley. “I would also like to congratulate another UB graduate, our fantastic athletic director, Anthony Vitti ’03.”

Nilerud said that UB has been a special place for him and his family for the last 20 years. He added that it is hard to fully express his gratitude to all those who have supported him, especially UB’s loyal alumni.

While all of the games—including the regional, Final Four, and the final match—were exciting contests, here’s how the national title match went down:

It was the first Saturday in December, a chilly day in Pittsburgh, where the game remained scoreless until the 78th minute. The UB team faced Grand Valley State University, a team that had progressed to the Final

Four in nine of the last 10 years. They were aiming for what seemed a sure thing—a sixth championship title, as they ranked number-one in the country and had not lost a match the entire season—but UB got in their way.

The scoreless game surprised many, while delighting the UB fans. Forward Nara DaCosta (junior) scored the first and only goal for UB—the winning goal—with an assist by classmate Elin Eklund. The goal was enough to capture the NCAA Championship final, where it’s winner take all for the national title. This win, as well as the 2-0 victory against UC San Diego in the semifinals, demonstrated that

the Purple Knights were the little engine that could against schools with much larger student populations.

“I could not be more proud of these young women for their incredible accomplishment of winning the 2018 NCAA Division II Women’s Soccer National Championship. I am extremely proud of Magnus and his staff for their hard work and efforts. Magnus’ leadership and passion for UB and the women’s soccer program has been instrumental in the success of the program,” Vitti said.

“It brings me great joy, not only as the director of athletics, but as an alumnus of this great University to be







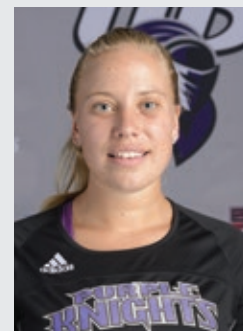
## Women's Soccer Standout Stats

UB goalie **Jennifer Wendelius**, a senior marketing major, was given the Elite 90 Award for posting the highest GPA of all the players in the women's soccer Final Four. She also shut out the opposition in both semifinals and finals.

Forward **Maegen Doyle**, named 2018 United Soccer Coaches NCAA Division II National Player of the Year, was one of the top scorers in the nation, netting a single-season school record of 28 goals with three assists for 59 points this year. She was also named to the All-America list based on her playing abilities and her status as one of the nation's leading scorers.

The team is represented by student-athletes from six countries, including the U.S., Sweden, Brazil, Norway, the Netherlands, and the U.K.

The National Championship staff was named the NCAA Division II Women's National Coaching Staff of the Year by the United Soccer Coaches.



a part of this magical season! Winning a national championship is the dream of every coach, student-athlete, and administrator. It feels great to be a National Champion!" Vitti added.

The talented and unstoppable team was welcomed back to campus in a grand manner, with a crowd of forever fans and a big array of purple and white balloons. Hubbell Gym was happening with a high decibel level and Purple

Knights from all over leading the cheers.

On December 3, during Bridgeport's annual tree-lighting event, the soccer team received yet another honor. The City demonstrated its UB team pride

when Mayor Joe Ganim presented the players with a key to the City.

For the win, for the pride, and for the Purple Knights, it was UB all the way. ■



Interested in sporting UB apparel to show your pride in your alma mater's women's soccer team? Visit our online store at [ubknightsteamshop.com](http://ubknightsteamshop.com).



# Closing Thought:

## A Perfect Metaphor for Community

By Edina Oestreicher '06

Although I must have told my parents dozens of times what I do for a living, the concept of what a “dean of students” does is not an easy one to explain. Are you like a high school principal? A guidance counselor? A teacher?

Yes to all of the above, depending on the situation. But I think my youngest daughter summed it up best in a letter she wrote about me in elementary school: “This is what my mom does. She works at the University of Bridgeport, and she helps students.”

The opportunity to interact with students on a daily basis and to hopefully have some positive impact on their lives is what makes my work so meaningful. They have enriched my life in immeasurable ways that I can't imagine having with any other demographic. In a world that is frequently full of divisiveness and unsettling news, my interactions with and observations of our students have made me feel more hopeful about our future. From students who freely give of their time to serve as “UB Buddies” to assist international students with their language skills to the dynamic group of students who created the Food Recovery Network to provide food to local homeless shelters, their selfless

spirit is an inspiration. Faced with an uncertain job market and a turbulent social climate, they are still hopeful and optimistic about their futures and are actively engaged in making their world more inclusive. As they develop their identities and aspirations, I have found students to be incredibly open to what older people can offer them.

If you aren't active in the life of a student, consider mentoring, tutoring, or even perhaps providing a job-shadow or internship experience for a UB student to learn more about your field of work. Reflect on the adults who served as role models for your growth, and consider returning the favor to a young person in your life. For young people to thrive and be successful, they need to know and feel that they are cared for and that their voices matter. It truly is as simple as that. Nothing is as important as a consistent and caring adult in the life of a young person.

Last summer, I was having lunch with Sam, one of our Summer Bridge



students. (The University's Summer Bridge program brings 30 first-year students to campus in early August for three weeks of an intensive jump-start program to prepare them for the rigors of college life.) When I asked Sam what activities she hoped to be involved in, she said she wanted to join the drumline team. However, UB didn't yet have a team, so I encouraged her to start one. Through the guidance and support of the director of our music program, the director of campus activities and civic engagement, and the athletic director, Sam was able to secure funding for equipment, uniforms, and instruction to teach enthusiastic students how to play. Today, the UB Sovereign Knights Drumline is a reality with over 20 actively engaged students who are eager to perform at campus events and athletic games. Sam's vision came to fruition because of her perseverance and the support of many UB staff members who helped give direction to her dream.

As I watched Sam enthusiastically perform with her drumline at our recent Homecoming Pep Rally, I realized that a drumline is a perfect metaphor for community. A solitary snare drum player or lone cymbal player cannot provide the vast and rich sound of over

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**In a world that is frequently full of divisiveness and unsettling news, my interactions with and observations of our students have made me feel more hopeful about our future.**

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a dozen students creating music that inspires and enriches us. A community works best when we all have a part to play and can all play in concert with each other to create something uplifting. Use your “instrument”—your talent, your experience, your passion—to connect with others, particularly the young people in your life. There is no reason for any of us, young or old, to sit on the sidelines. Your engagement can help amplify a young person's future, and in the process, help you expand your repertoire. ■

*Edina Oestreicher '06 is the vice president of student affairs and dean of students. Thanks to working with young people, she recently learned what a meme is and how to do the Cupid Shuffle.*



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