

UB Knightlines



She Did It!

School of Education alumna Jahana Hayes
is named the 2016 National Teacher of the Year

President's Line



Neil Albert Salonen

University presidents play several roles, but one that I'm most enthusiastic about is being a fan of the Purple Knights. It gives me tremendous pleasure to watch our skilled coaching staff guide athletes to new levels of success. Mind you, excitement and tension often run hand-in-hand. This year, the men's baseball team came from behind to win a third of its games. Because of its unbelievable, nail-biting season, the team got an at-large bid to compete in the NCAA Division II East Regional Conference Championship for the first time in the University's history. Inning by inning, game by game, season by season, the Purple Knights are doing better than ever before.

This is the reason that fans like me are drawn to sports. Championships and landslide victories are awe-inspiring, but steady, incremental success, especially success after setback, nurtures something we all need, even if we'll never play shortstop or lace up a pair of cleats: hope. Teams like UB men's baseball are proof that hard work and determination often matter as much, if not more, than natural talent. We need to dream—and be ready to work hard.

I can't think of a more appropriate message as we finish one academic year and prepare for the next. Alumnus Manish Chowdhary '00 had the same view when he addressed the Class of 2016 at Commencement in May. Manish has made a name for himself and his award-winning company, GoECart, but like the baseball team, he had to come from behind before hitting it out of the park. As Manish told graduates, he struggled academically when he arrived at UB as an undergraduate computer science major, but he persisted. He sought opportunities to grow stronger by getting permission to audit graduate-level classes. He hitched rides to participate in internships. He didn't worry about failure because he was willing to try again and again and again until he got it right. (For more about his fascinating story, see the "Focus On" interview on page 34.)

At UB, we continue to seek out opportunities to strengthen ourselves and assess our performance as we break new ground. We've just completed a year that saw our enrollment reach over 5,400 students—the highest level in nearly 30 years. Our steady and purposeful growth reflects improvements across all academic disciplines. As I write this, students are applying to our Doctor of Health Sciences program, our newest offering to train professionals in health care. Two of our most recently developed online MBA classes, "Legal Environment of Business and Ethics" and "Global Program and Project Management" have just been showcased by the Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium as exemplars in e-learning. Meanwhile, the online MBA program continues to evolve, and this fall we'll proudly introduce concentrations in Analytics Intelligence and Human Resources Management.

Trying, trying harder, and then succeeding is visible at UB's Student Entrepreneurship Center. When the center opened its doors last August, we knew students would be interested in working with professionals who could help them bring ideas to market, but we had no idea of how successful the project would be in so short a time. In total, 84 students were accepted at the Center this academic year. Of those, 27 students are now actively working toward forming their own businesses, and eight more have already launched businesses in fields from green energy to online merchandising. In their first season at bat, UB student-entrepreneurs are already hitting home runs.

The game, as it were, isn't finished yet. I invite you to stay tuned because one thing is clear: like the men's baseball team, UB is only getting better. We need fans like you to support UB, its athletes, its entrepreneurs and other students, and our inspired faculty, all of whom are continually reaching for new heights.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Neil Albert Salonen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first and last names being the most prominent.

Neil Albert Salonen
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President
Neil Albert Salonen

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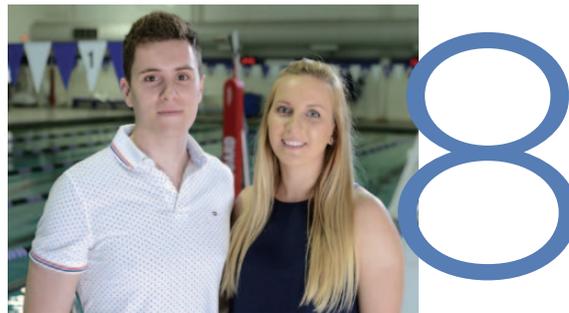
Knightlines is published three times a year for University of Bridgeport alumni and friends by the Office of University Relations.

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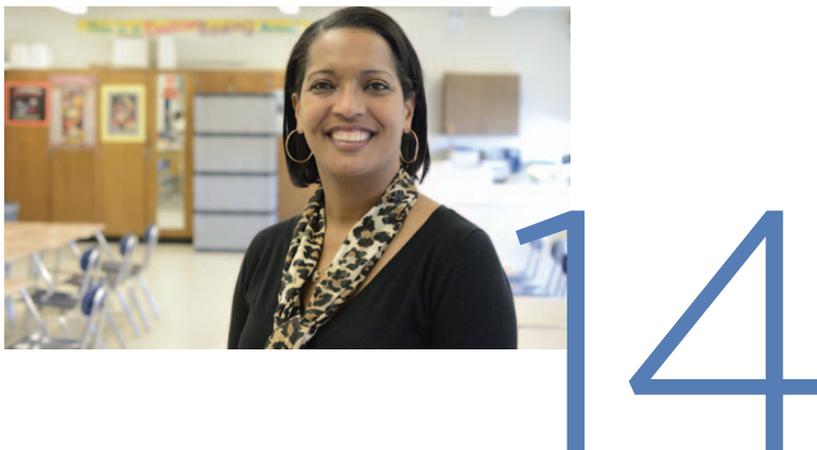


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Editor's Note

More than 1400 members of the Class of 2016 received their degrees on May 7, and as they made their way into Webster Bank Arena, loved ones cheered, snapped photographs, and relished the event that was about to unfold.

They weren't alone. This year, UB broadcasted a live feed from Commencement that allowed individuals to log on and celebrate UB's 106th graduation as well. Using computers, smartphones, and other devices, more than 7000 individuals from Saudi Arabia to Australia, England, and China watched, too.

As ceremonies concluded, I couldn't help wondering what comes next for the Class of 2016. Commencement means a beginning, after all, and I'm always eager to know what our newest alumni are doing as they embark on the next chapters of their lives. By all indications, they seem off to an incredible start, working for top-tier companies like Intel or running their own businesses. (See "Faces from the Class of 2016" on page 8.)

Alumna Jahana Hayes graces the cover of our magazine for the second consecutive issue. How could she not? On April 28, Hayes was named National Teacher of the Year, and this spring headed to the White House to be lauded by President Obama. It's an extraordinary accomplishment for a former teenage mom who refused to give up her dream of becoming a teacher.

It's also immensely satisfying to hear from alumnus Manish Chowdhary '00, who delivered this year's Commencement Address. Chowdhary embraced every opportunity UB had to offer and currently runs the wildly successful business he launched from his dorm room in Bodine Hall (for more, see page 34).

As I write this, I know there are thousands of other alumni with equally compelling stories to catch up on. I bet you're one of them. So please, keep in touch. Share your news and let us know "what's next" with you!



Leslie Geary
Founding Editor

Pipelines



Thank You, Prof. Selig!

Dear Editor,

My name is Pooja Gupta, and I am a Class of 2016 graduate from the master's program in Technology Management with a concentration in IT.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to my professor and Dean for Industry Outreach Dr. Gad Selig for all of his help and advice when I first joined the University. He has been a truly inspirational figure to me, and I am extremely grateful for all of his help.

My entire time at UB has been really amazing, and I have become a better person. I am really thankful for the course structure designed for technology management students as it has helped me to land a good job with American Express as a Technical Lead.

Pooja Gupta '16

Phoenix, Arizona

Golden Knights

Dear Editor,

I'm writing to thank UB for a wonderful Golden Knights event. My wife, my sister, and I had such an enjoyable day. From the time we arrived to the good-byes in the parking lot, the day exceeded our expectations. All of you should be congratulated on making all of us feel so special while we relived some of the best times of our lives.

Richard Lanza '66

Port Chester, NY

Dear Editor,

It was good to reflect back on so many fond memories during Commencement when we were honored as Golden Knights. The faculty, administration, and staff could not have been more helpful.

The gourmet lunch was just delicious, and the gifts in the surprise goody bag will remind those of us Golden Knights of the celebration! I was shocked to see my yearbook photo up on the screen considering that staff at Alumni Relations took my registration the day before—it was so thoughtful to go through the extra effort! With many thanks and congratulations on a job well done!

Jane Vinacour Schneider '66

Yorktown Heights, NY

Dear Editor,

The graduation ceremony honoring the Golden Knights was very special. I would like to thank everyone involved in making it a day to remember. Please also thank the security men in the ABC building who helped jump my dead car battery.

Alice Dee Cupole '66

Oxford, CT

Dear Editor,

I wanted to thank everyone for a wonderful day at University of Bridgeport on May 7. As a Golden Knight, I was impressed. The day was so well organized. Each individual was so pleasant and did a super job in guiding us to where we needed to be. I'd like to thank George Estrada for all the timely information he gave me about UB, plus the UB Alumni Association for the gift bag of goodies.

Joan Arenberg Bone '66

West Newton, MA

Closing Thought

Dear Editor,

I just read Roxie Ray's "Closing Thought" essay in the Spring 2016 edition of *Knightlines* ("Resident Alien"), and it brought back the time Roxie and I worked together in Stamford at Valleylab, a medical-device manufacturer. Her story was great, and I enjoyed reading about the early days of her life.

I went to UB for my master's in Electrical Engineering, and I am happy to see that Roxie is at UB, helping others.

Brian Langer '87

Apex, NC

Have an opinion?

We'd love to hear from you!

Please send Letters to the Editor to knightlines@bridgeport.edu or to Knightlines, Cortright Hall, University of Bridgeport, 219 Park Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06604.

Please be sure to include your full name, contact information, and UB class year if applicable. Letters may be edited for length, clarity, style, or accuracy.



For the first time ever, a live video stream allowed thousands of viewers from around the world to watch Commencement in real time.

Trending@UB



By Leslie Geary

Saudi Arabia. India. England. Louisiana and Hawaii.

From dazzling cities to sleepy villages around the world, more than 7000 viewers logged onto computers, smartphones, and other mobile devices to watch the University of Bridgeport's 106th Commencement as ceremonies were recorded and streamed live from the Webster Bank Arena in Bridgeport on Saturday, May 7.

The video feed began at 10 a.m. sharp. Almost immediately, thousands of relatives and loved ones began watching.

(continued on page 7)

“ One of the beauties of the University of Bridgeport is that we come from all walks of life, with many different backgrounds, yet at the end of our journey we ended up here, as graduating Purple Knights!”

— Khrystian Pereira '16



Manish Chowdhary '00 (upper left) addressed graduates while others cheered and posed.





#UBGrad2016



“Watching #UBGrad2016, waiting to see Erin McNally!” one enthusiastic viewer posted on Facebook.

Other congratulatory messages to graduates, along with selfies of families watching the video feed, were posted on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram via the specially created hashtag #UBGrad2016, pushing it to become the second-largest trending topic on Twitter in the region for a period of 24 hours.

All told, there were nearly 10,200 total views of the livestream. Facebook live UB Commencement videos ramped up to an average of 8500 views. Over 70 percent of viewers used mobile devices to access the stream.

The event’s online global reach reflected the diversity of the Class of 2016, whose members represented 45 states and 80 countries.

“*Bienvenidos!*” called out Class Speaker Khyrstian Pereira ’16 as he approached the dias. “*Ahlan wa sahlan. Vitejte. Shagotom. Benvenuti. Willkommen. Huān yíng. Bienvenue Hwan-yeonghabnida. Dobro pozhalovat’. Bem vindos—Welcome!*”

“One of the beauties of the University of Bridgeport is that we come from all walks of life, with many different backgrounds, yet at the end of our journey we ended up here, as graduating Purple Knights!” Pereira continued. “More importantly, we are a family.”

Pereira’s message was underscored by the return of members of the Class of 1966, who were enthusiastically applauded as they stood on stage to be recognized as Golden Knights on the 50th anniversary of their UB graduation. Alumnus Manish Chowdhary ’00 was similarly greeted as he accepted an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters before delivering this year’s Commencement Address.

Giving the speech, he said, was a “once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.”

Just like 40 percent of the graduates he addressed, Chowdhary enrolled at UB as an international student. Like many who were about to receive degrees, his education signified more than academic success: it paved the way to radically changing the course of his life. Neither of his parents went to high school, and the small village where he was raised in western India had

no electricity or telephones. Yet Chowdhary’s parents understood that education could provide countless possibilities for their son, so at age 4, he was sent 1000 miles from home to live with his uncle and go to school.

As an undergraduate majoring in Computer Science and Engineering at UB, Chowdhary struggled academically. After failing music, linear algebra, and electrical engineering, he was placed on academic probation.

“But that did not stop me from driving all the way to Stamford just to sit in on Prof. [Ausif] Mahmood’s software engineering classes on Saturday mornings or building my first IVR software application under the direction of [School of Engineering Dean] Dr. Tarek Sobh,” Chowdhary told graduates. “So, you get the drift. I wasn’t the smartest kid on campus, but I had this other thing called *grit*.”

At UB, Chowdhary went into business selling reassembled computers to fellow students before founding his award-winning company, GoECart, now headquartered in Bridgeport.

Chowdhary’s resilience resonated with graduates like Trinadh Venna ’16. His extended family in Nalgonda, India, put up their land as collateral in order to borrow money to send him to UB.

“It was a very big thing to see them sign [the loan]. If the loan is not paid, the property will be seized, but no one raised an objection. They did this thing for me,” said Venna, who earned a Master of Science in Computer Science and Engineering. “My grandmother is paralyzed so she had to make a thumb impression [on the documents] as she cannot sign. But it was my grandmother who told my dad, ‘I want Trinadh to go abroad to study.’”

As Venna prepared to file into Webster Bank Area with fellow graduates, about 30 of his relatives in India logged onto computers to watch him receive his degree from UB President Neil Salonen. ■

Don’t miss it!

Can’t get enough of Commencement 2016? An archive of the webcast is now available at Bridgeport.edu/ubgradmemories.



They excelled at UB; now they're ready for what comes next.

Faces

By Leslie Geary



Terrell Griffith

MAJOR: Bachelor of Fine Arts, Graphic Design

HOMETOWN: Bridgeport

WHAT'S NEXT: In May, Griffith began work at a Westport, CT, design firm.

Terrell Griffith applied to the University eager to enhance his skills as a young graphic designer.

He'd been mesmerized by the field since he was 13 and met a designer who was creating a poster for a concert. A year later, Griffith landed his first design internship at a print shop in Shelton, Connecticut, thanks to his parents, who knew the owner and helped him obtain the entry-level position.

"I started small, and after a while, the training wheels were taken off," says Griffith, now 22. "I did a lot of learning during those two summers."

By 16, Griffith was using his laptop computer to make business cards, fliers, posters—even a website or two—for friends of his parents who were willing to give the fledgling young designer some of his first work. "The price," Griffith explains with a grin, "was right."

By the time it came to applying for college, there was no question that Griffith was going to major in graphic design. But he zeroed in on UB's Shintaro Akatsu School of Design (SASD) because its program encourages students to work on real-world projects outside of the traditional classroom.

Emily Larned, chairperson of the Graphic Design Program at SASD, taught Griffith how to ask clients questions to uncover what they really need, to brainstorm concept-driven solutions, and to present ideas effectively. She also runs a graphic design lab in downtown Bridgeport. There, area businesses or individuals can hire students like Griffith to create specific materials, like posters, publication designs, or logos and other identity and brand concepts.

After his sophomore year, Griffith landed a paid internship with MillerSmith. The firm was founded by Brian Miller, a former adjunct professor at SASD. For the past two years, Griffith has worked at the firm's Westport sun-drenched offices, where he said he's "learned a lot about keeping up with client relationships and providing what they ask for."

"I love it!" Griffith adds. "I love the fact that I can go in and do work, and the time flies by. It's so calming to me to know that I love what I'm doing."

Happily, Griffith can work as long as he likes. This spring, he was offered a full-time job at MillerSmith.

He started right after graduation.

from the Class of 2016

Desmond Ntesh

MAJOR: Master of Business Administration, Accounting

HOMETOWN: Cameroon, West Africa

WHAT'S NEXT: Ntesh is managing a start-up shoe company.

It started with lollipops. Not the hard, stick-to-your-teeth ones you find in the United States.

"These were softer, creamy. They tasted like fruit," says student Desmond Ntesh, who is from Cameroon.

His love of the sweets was so great, that at age 11, Ntesh launched his first business to earn money for the treats. It was a simple job—selling mangoes in the local market. But "it was fun to earn the money, to be in control," he says. "If I wanted something, I didn't have to go to my mom. I could just go to the store."

Five years later, Ntesh arrived at UB. He was 16—one of the school's youngest freshmen ever—and too young to have clearly defined goals. Nonetheless, he decided to take business courses "to see where it took me."

It was a fortuitously timed decision. Since Ntesh's arrival at UB, the University has cut the ribbon to the new Ernest C. Trefz School of Business, expanded the school's curriculum, added online courses, and refocused its academic core on entrepreneurial training by offering a host of programs, lectures, and campaigns. Chief among them: UB's new Student Entrepreneur Center.

Ntesh was among the first students to visit the center when it opened in the fall of 2015. Ntesh's business idea—an online shoe company—was inspired by his early childhood and Christmas with his mother.

"In Cameroon, ladies got a dress to wear on Christmas day and boys got Christmas shoes," he

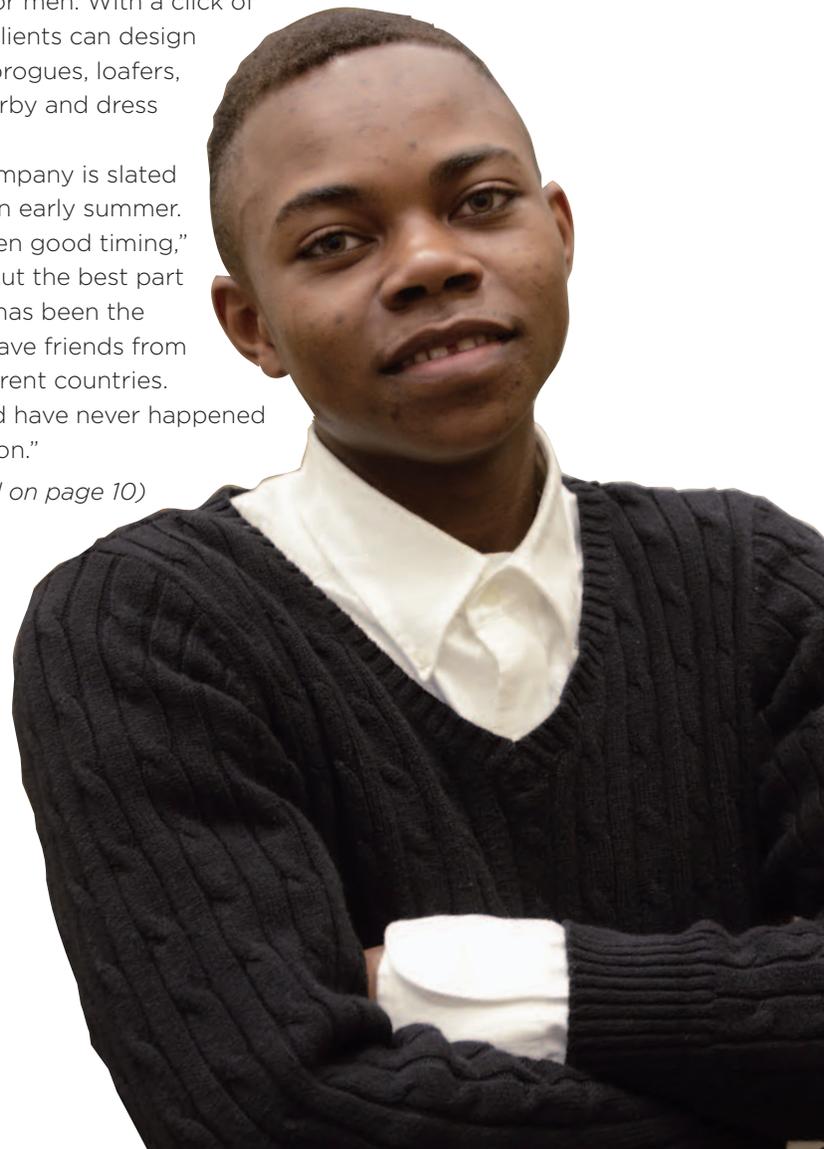
said. "My mom used to take me to a place that measured your feet and made custom shoes for you. When I came here [to the U.S.], there was nothing like that, but they were beautiful shoes. They were very special."

Thus inspired, the business major spent his senior year working with faculty advisors at the SEC to start LeRuxx, an online custom-shoe business for men. With a click of a mouse, clients can design high-end brogues, loafers, lace-up derby and dress shoes.

The company is slated to launch in early summer.

"It's been good timing," he says. "But the best part about UB has been the people. I have friends from many different countries. That would have never happened in Cameroon."

(continued on page 10)



Khrystian Pereira

MAJOR: Bachelor of Arts, International Political Economy and Diplomacy and Religion and Politics

HOMETOWN: Naugatuck, CT

NEXT MOVE: Pereira starts graduate studies in the fall.

Khrystian Pereira has spent years trying to cross international boundaries. He was nine when his family emigrated from Brazil and settled in Naugatuck, Connecticut; rather than unsettling Pereira, the splashdown into a strange new world of snow storms and take-out meals sparked a curiosity about the rest of the globe. What was it like? The possibilities seemed as limitless as the stars that once guided early explorers: Darwin, da Gama, Vespucci. By the time he was studying French (his third language) in high school, Pereira wondered if he, too, could forge a career navigating the world.

Then someone told him about UB's College of

Public and International Affairs (CPIA). Students enrolled in its degree programs to prepare to work in diplomatic careers, took immersive language courses, and even studied abroad. Pereira didn't think twice: in the fall of 2013 he enrolled as an undergraduate with a major in International Political Economy and Diplomacy. He later added a second major in Religion and Politics.

Despite the extra coursework involved, Pereira graduated from UB a year ahead of schedule and was accepted to Johns Hopkins University, where this fall he begins studying for a master's degree in Foreign Affairs. His goal: to work in the diplomatic corps.

"It's been amazing," says Pereira. "I never could have imagined all the opportunities I'd have to see the world. I'm so grateful."

When he arrived at UB, Pereira was delighted to see that he didn't have to board a plane to explore other cultures: with students representing 81 countries, the world was already present on campus. His professors also pointed toward new vistas.

Nancy Wei opened East Asia with her knowledge as a Fulbright Scholar specializing in Chinese foreign policy, South China Sea disputes, and U.S.-China relations. Stephen Hess taught him about politics, and encouraged Pereira to join UB's Model United Nations team, which went on to compete in the Czech Republic. When Pereira decided to major in Religion and Politics, Robert Riggs, an expert on Islam and the Middle East, helped him obtain an internship in Amman, Jordan, during the summer of 2014.

"The three of them—Wei, Hess, and Riggs—it was like a perfect trifecta of positive support," said Pereira. "They wrote my letters for graduate school. UB truly has given me so much more than I could have ever imagined."



Alja Tavcar

MAJOR: Master of Science, Technology Management; Master of Business Administration
HOMETOWN: Ljubljana, Slovenia
WHAT'S NEXT: Tavcar starts working at Intel on August 1.

Ruben Gimenez

MAJOR: Master of Science, Computer Science and Engineering; Master of Business Administration
HOMETOWN: Burgos, Spain
WHAT'S NEXT: His job at BlackRock begins August 1.

Alja Tavcar and Ruben Gimenez were strangers when they enrolled at UB. But their similar backgrounds as international students, and competitive swimmers, helped them to forge a special friendship and fruitful future. Soon after graduation, the recently minted graduates moved to California to rent their first apartment before starting jobs on August 1: Tavcar was hired by Intel. Jimenez will go to work at BlackRock, the biggest asset-management company in the world.

Their speedy career starts reflect a lot about the Class of 2016's power couple. Both Tavcar and Gimenez were recruited by former UB swim coach Brad Flood in 2011. For the past four years, says Tavcar, they have relished being members of the swim team's "big family of international students." When not in the pool, they spent most of their time with teammates, studying, celebrating holidays, bowling—just hanging out.

Yet even within this tight-knit group, Gimenez and Tavcar felt a mutual bond of shared ambition.

"We are both competitive," explains Gimenez, who wrapped up his UB career with a 3.9 cumulative GPA and several honors, including a NCAA 2016's Today's Top 10 Award. Considered to be one of the NCAA's most prestigious prizes, the Top 10 Award recognizes student-athletes for their accomplishments in sports, in the classroom, and in the community.

It was a well-deserved honor. When not doing laps, both Gimenez and Tavcar devoted time preparing for their professional futures. Both majored in technology management and business—subjects they hoped would lay the groundwork for promising careers. Meanwhile, Tavcar, who worked all four years while she was at UB to help her family pay for expenses, found time to start a business club. With guidance



from Ernest C. Trefz School of Business Assistant Dean Tim Raynor and Professor Elena Cahill, the club organized tours and meetings at Bloomberg and Kickstarter.

"We like to do everything perfectly, so we pushed our academics as much athletics. That's what was important to us—our professional futures," says Gimenez. "That's how we both ended up getting job offers from big companies. But it was lucky they're not so far from each other so we can live together."

Tavcar agrees: "Swimming. School. We've been supporting each other from the beginning." ■

Saving Food, Feeding People

A new club on campus teams up with Sodexo to deliver hundreds of pounds of surplus food to feed the hungry.

By Leslie Geary

The rush begins shortly before noon, when approximately 500 students, faculty, and administrators arrive at Marina Dining Hall for lunch. About 40 minutes later, diners return to classrooms and offices, and no one, it seems, gives a second thought about the food that's left behind.

Except for student Michael Asmerom and UB Dining Services General Manager Tony DeLuca.

The two became friends when Asmerom was asked to serve as the Student Government Association dining liaison. His job: to tell Sodexo Dining Services, which is under the direction of DeLuca, what students like about the food at UB and what they'd change. Their roles—dining manager and meal ambassador—gave the two men plenty of time to think about the surplus food in the kitchen that never made it to the dining room: unneeded, unserved, and headed to the dumpsters.

"I just thought someone else could use it," said Asmerom.

So did DeLuca. He told Asmerom about Food Recovery Network, a consortium made up of Sodexo, other food providers, and approximately 180 U.S. schools and universities that donate meals to shelters and other organizations that help those in need. After talking to DeLuca, Asmerom invited his friend Quantasha Brown to help him start the Food Recovery Network Club at UB.

This spring, their first semester in operation, the club collected over 1300 pounds of food for

the homeless and needy individuals, including the elderly and children living in Bridgeport. The city has some of the highest hunger indices in the state, according to the nonprofit group, End Hunger Connecticut. Experts say children are particularly vulnerable to food shortages, and more than eight out of 10 students in the city's schools participate in the School Breakfast Program. Nearly all—99 percent—of Bridgeport students are eligible for free or reduced-price school lunches.

"Until I did research and started talking with Michael, I had no idea how many people and children needed food in Bridgeport," said Brown. "It's been really rewarding to help."

Each Tuesday evening, about a dozen student club members met a Sodexo employee at Marina Dining Hall to weigh, wrap, and label trays of surplus food and individual meals, like sandwiches and fresh fruit. They loaded the week's take into a car and personally delivered it to United Church of Christ on Park Avenue.

"It's really made an impact," said Rev. Tracy Hughes. "Since we started getting food from UB, we have served over 1960 people and provided 2000 meals from our pantry."

The food is distributed within 24 hours of delivery. Trays of hot meals, from roasted vegetables to lasagna or ethnic favorites like chicken tikka masala, are packaged into single-serving containers for individuals to take with them. Cold snacks, sandwiches, and desserts are available for guests, too.



The church pantry relies on staples like canned goods and boxes of pasta, so the weekly donation from UB, which may include fresh fruit or homemade baked bread, “adds variety, increases the amount of nutritious meals we try to offer, and gives neighbors an opportunity to select something special,” said Hughes. “It’s always a big hit.”

DeLuca and the students say they never know which dishes from UB will go unused. But they agree the deliveries add a nice mix. “It’s made me look at food differently,” said Asmerom. “The homeless were so grateful for it. It’s so humbling.”

The program won’t run during the summer, when Marina is closed, but one thing is certain: the Food Recovery Network Club and Sodexo will be up and running next fall, said DeLuca.

“People on my staff and the students want to know what more they can do.” he said. “It’s been a fantastic partnership, and we look forward to growing it.” ■



Sort, wrap, deliver, serve!
Food Recovery Network
members deliver food to
those in need.





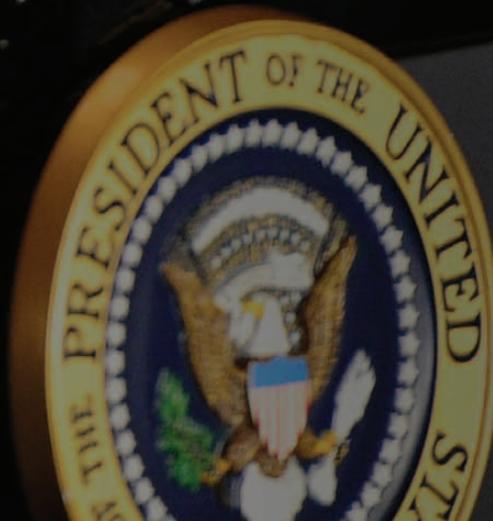
Out of more than 3 million teachers in the U.S., alumna Jahana Hayes wins National Teacher of the Year.

She Did It!

By Leslie Geary

Jahana Hayes '14, an alumna of UB's School of Education, was named the 2016 National Teacher of the Year by the Council of Chief State School Officers for her ability to inspire at-risk students to break through the bonds of poverty and to seize academic and civic opportunities that have the power to transform the world.

(continued on page 16)





The National Teacher of the Year (NTOY) Program began in 1952 and is the oldest, most prestigious national honors program that focuses public attention on excellence in teaching. The National Teacher of the Year is chosen from among the State Teachers of the Year by a national committee representing major national education organizations. Each April, the NTOY is introduced to the American people by the president of the United States.

Hayes, who was honored by President Obama at the White House on May 4, will spend the year travelling throughout the U.S. and internationally to advocate on behalf of educators and students. She is expected to attend at least 150 events and to serve on national and state commissions and policy-advising bodies.

"I'm excited to bring my values about service learning and giving back to communities to a national platform, and hopefully, to inspire other teachers to do the same," Hayes said on a live April 28 interview on *CBS This Morning*, when she was announced as National Teacher of the Year.

"I think that so much of our focus has been graduating students who are self-sustaining. I think we need to graduate citizens. We need to graduate people who care about their neighbors, who will be conscientious, productive members of society. This is the nation I want to see," she added.

Defying the odds

Hayes grew up and attended school in Waterbury, Connecticut, where she now teaches history at John F. Kennedy High School. More than 46 percent of the school's students live at or below the poverty line.

Like her students, Hayes is intimately familiar with the grind of poverty and the concomitant barriers it poses to education and opportunity. When her own elementary school teachers organized evening parent conferences, for instance, Hayes's grandmother was unable to attend because she didn't have transportation to get to school.

Yet school provided a persistent beacon of hope for Hayes: She fondly recalls teachers who loaned her books or baked her birthday cakes. Later, when Hayes became a teenage mother, they urged her to finish school and go to college. Their kindness and professionalism, along with the love of family and friends, inspired Hayes to become the first in her family to attend college and be a teacher.

"Even within that neighborhood [of Waterbury], there were so many positive people. I was raised by my community so I don't take that responsibility of being a teacher lightly," Hayes said. "I know that role doesn't end at the classroom. There were so many people outside of the traditional role who stepped up and who were impactful [to me]. . . . So much has been given to me that I feel obligated to make that a part of who I am."





Hayes capped off her education with a Sixth-Year Degree from the University, where she quickly established herself as a leader for her insistence on viewing education from the perspective of students, not administrators.

“She was looking for ways to get parents involved who really were not yet involved,” said UB School of Education professor Gail Perilli, who taught Hayes in her Educational Leadership class. “She wanted equality for all students.”

Focus on service

In addition to teaching government and history classes at Kennedy High School, Hayes chairs the Kennedy SOAR Review Board, which provides a “school within a school” for highly gifted students who apply to participate in its advanced courses. She is a coadvisor of HOPE, a student-service club at Kennedy High that has raised thousands of dollars to support local Relay for Life cancer walks and to participate in Habitat for Humanity builds in New Orleans and Charleston.

At the White House ceremony in May, Hayes told President Obama and other dignitaries that she focuses on service-learning in order to help students who have nothing to see their value in the world.

“Like every teacher, I started as a student and like many students around the country, I know what it feels like to have a dream and to exist in an environment where nothing is expected to

(continued on page 18)



Previous page: Jahana Hayes on the set of *CBS This Morning* and back at Kennedy High School. Above: Hayes and her students plan and volunteer in community campaigns.



“ I know what it feels like to struggle to find sunlight and constantly be met with concrete barriers. I see myself in every one of those students, and I carry my own experiences as a reminder that as a teacher, I have to be better. ”



Left: Hayes and her students at the 2016 Connecticut Teacher of the Year ceremonies, a warm-up for her White House appearance.

thrive. Schools where nothing is said or done to nurture or support a dream. I know what it feels like to struggle to find sunlight and constantly be met with concrete barriers. I see myself in every one of those students, and I carry my own experiences as a reminder that as a teacher, I have to be better. I have to seize every encounter as an opportunity to create a positive memory for a child. I remember vividly the teachers who created those memories for me and encouraged me to challenge myself. I remember vividly the adults in my community who inspired me to give back to others; that is what teaching is about . . . the passion, the commitment, the joy, the stories.

Hayes's path to becoming the 2016 National Teacher of the Year began when she was nominated for and won the John F. Kennedy Teacher of the Year and then the Waterbury, CT, School District Educator of the Year in 2015. She then won 2016 Connecticut State Teacher of the Year, prompting Kennedy's approximately 1300 students and colleagues to organize a massive surprise pep rally in the school gymnasium.

Kennedy High School student Syrenitee Kee, 17, explained Hayes's popularity earlier this winter. "The way she encourages her students to be the best—she really cares." ■

News Lines

American Ninja (really!)

UB alumnus is signed by the Japanese tourist board for acrobatic acts that astound and amaze.

By Leslie Geary

Alumnus Chris O'Neill '10 has become the first foreigner hired as a professional ninja warrior in Japan.

O'Neill, 29, was among 235 applicants who auditioned to become a paid warrior after the central Aichi prefecture tourist board posted a want ad for six full-time ninjas.

"He will be Japan's first salaried, full-time ninja paid by a local municipality." Satoshi Adachi, from Aichi's tourism unit, told international media outlets.

O'Neill earned his bachelor's degree in martial arts at UB, and was an omnipresent source of

enthusiasm on campus. When not leading yoga sessions outside of Wheeler Recreation Center, he served as a student ambassador. After graduating, he was hired by UB's International Admissions Office.

In the summer of 2013, he decided to travel around the world for pleasure and has since visited more than 25 countries ranging from Colombia to Turkey and Indonesia.

In Japan, O'Neill made such a positive impression on judges with his acrobatic back flips that they created an extra spot just for him. ■



Airborne! O'Neill in Bolivia, Paraguay, and Ecuador



Photos by Chris O'Neill



From left: Taehoon Park, Brian Rocks, Jiaping Zhao, Wenyu Xin (foreground), Shuhan Chen, and Jiaxiang Shen

Superior Safety

SASD students win big at the NY International Auto Show.

Six industrial design students from Shintaro Akatsu School of Design (SASD) were some of the biggest winners at the New York International Auto Show in April, when they were awarded nearly every prize, including the \$5000 Grand Prize, for devices they designed to save lives in the event of traffic accidents—and even prevent mishaps from occurring in the first place.

Industrial Design majors Brian Rocks, Taehoon Park, Jiaping Zhao, Wenyu Xin, Shuhan Chen, and Jiaxiang Shen won the Grand, Second, Third and Fifth Place prizes at the “Designs for Safety Competition,” which is held each year at the auto show in the Jacob K. Javits Center.

This is not the first time that SASD students have won Safety Competition prizes, said Industrial Design Chairman Richard Yelle, “but it is always exciting to see our students’ talent being recognized by automotive-industry and traffic-safety experts at this premier event.”

Jiaxiang Shen and Kiaping Zhao teamed up and won the \$5000 First Place Prize for an emergency-alert LED system they named Patronus. When a car is disabled, LED lights under the car begin to flash quickly and brightly so a vehicle

that is equipped with the system can clearly inform surrounding vehicles of an emergency situation.

Students Shuhan Chen and Wenyu Xin won \$2500 for their device, Double Direction Light. It aims to reduce the approximately 500,000 traffic accidents that occur each year at blind intersections and on curvy roads with limited visibility. The system is powered by solar panels, saving energy.

The \$1250 Third Place Prize was awarded to student Taehoon Park for Quartrone, an airborne ambulance system used to extract passengers from isolated or difficult-to-reach accident sites.

Brian Rocks won \$1250 Fifth Place Prize for the Lug-Light, a device that fits on tires like any other standard lug nut. However, it also has the added capability of lighting up when it becomes loose. Along with a Bluetooth notification that’s received on the driver’s phone, the Lug-Light’s bright presence allows others to be aware of a potentially unsafe situation. “Awareness of loose tires could prevent wheel separations before they happen and ultimately save lives,” said Rocks. ■

- L.G.

News Lines

UB's Promise

UB's new affordable-education campaign guarantees state students who enroll at the University will pay tuition on par with public colleges.



"We know that in today's society, the overwhelming cost of higher education can hinder a student's options for choosing the best college for their studies," said Associate Vice President for Enrollment Karissa Peckham. "We want to make it possible for incoming students to experience the benefits of a private institution without having to pay exponentially more than an in-state public school. UB firmly believes that a solid education should be both accessible and attainable."

With the nation's current student debt crisis, it is becoming increasingly difficult for students to have access to quality higher education without a cumbersome financial burden. According to the Federal Reserve, total education debt reached \$1.3 trillion in 2015. ■ - L.G.

To eliminate financial barriers to a higher education, the University in April unveiled Connecticut Promise, a bold, new campaign that allows Connecticut residents to enroll at UB at a cost comparable to a public college education.

Under the program, Connecticut Promise guarantees that first-time, full-time freshmen residing in Connecticut will pay no more than \$18,500 out-of-pocket for tuition, fees, and room and board after all scholarships and grants have been applied. An in-state commuting freshman not living on UB's campus will be required to pay even less—no more than \$12,000 a year.

The new campaign takes effect this fall.



Mission Trip

UB Physician Assistants are transformed after providing critical care in Guatemala.

The goal of medicine is to have patients change for the better after being treated by health providers.

But this spring, students from the UB Physician Assistant Institute (UBPAI) were the ones who were completely “transformed” after traveling to Guatemala to provide much-needed medical care and equipment, participants said.

“Often it takes time away from the mundane routines at home to realize how much is taken for granted,” said UBPAI student Miro Paridis. “Guatemala transformed the group. It opened eyes, minds, and hearts, and we are forever grateful.”

Paridis and five other students were accompanied on their ten day trip by professors Stephenie Kunkel and Medeya Tsnobiladze. Kunkel, who is director of academic affairs at UBPAI, is a physician assistant who specializes in emergency medicine. Tsnobiladze is a naturopathic physician and the director of research at UBPAI.

The group traveled to the mountainous city of Quetzaltenango, home to three government-funded health clinics that are “understaffed and largely undersupplied,” said Kunkel.

Paridis, Vanessa Carmona, Jenna Stoller, Robin Fiftal, Liliya Tereshchuck, and Brad Pettiti helped fill equipment shortages by donating blood pres-



sure cuffs, glucometers, stethoscopes, sterile gloves, thermometers, first aid supplies, and an automatic external defibrillator.

The students were able to provide the equipment by hosting a series of fundraisers throughout the fall and early winter of 2015-2016.

They also administered vaccinations, measured pediatric heights and weights, took vital signs, performed physical exams, and treated sick patients.

“They did not have the medical professionals available to give flu vaccines, so our PAI student volunteers took over this responsibility, and in their free time, they taught CPR to the clinic staff and to the staff of a local women’s shelter,” said Kunkel. ■ - L.G.



News Lines

The Answer Is . . .

After winning the CT Medical Challenge Bowl, UB team heads to Texas.

From left: Timothy Wright, Lauren Kelly, and Ryan Madden brought home the Medical Challenge Bowl trophy in March.



A team from the University of Bridgeport Physician Assistant Institute won the Connecticut Physician Assistant Medical Challenge Bowl, qualifying to advance to the National Medical Challenge Bowl.

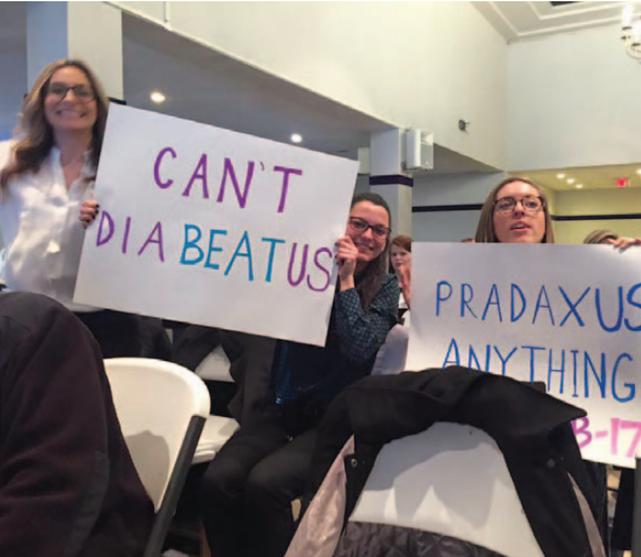
UB team members Ryan Madden, Lauren Kelly, and Timothy Wright were awarded the silver championship trophy on March 5 after being the first to correctly answer approximately 100 complex medical questions in rapid-fire Jeopardy-style rounds.

The Connecticut Medical Challenge Bowl is held annually at the Connecticut Academy of Physician Assistants Conference. This year, the event was hosted at UB and drew 200 faculty and students from Yale, Lock Haven, Quinnipiac, and Johnson and Wales Universities.

The UB winners then competed against more than 70 teams at the 2016 National Medical

Executive Speakers

NY Federal Reserve CEO among several top leaders at UB.



Challenge Bowl in San Antonio from May 14-18.

The national competition is sponsored by the American Academy of Physician Assistants and requires teams to answer more than 250 questions on a variety of medical topics, such as anatomy, microbiology, pulmonary, cardiology, emergency medicine, primary care, OB/GYN, surgery, and diagnosis.

"This is the third time we've had teams compete in the Connecticut Challenge Bowl and the second time we've won," said PAI Director of Academic Affairs and team adviser Stephenie Kunkel. "We're so proud of our students who've brought back the trophy to the Physician Assistant Institute, but beyond prizes, these victories represent the quality of education we provide and our students' dedication to the profession." ■ - L.G.

Federal Reserve Bank of New York President and CEO William Dudley attracted a standing-room-only crowd when he spoke at the Ernest C. Trefz School of Business in April during school's ongoing Executive Speakers Series.

Programming for the spring semester also featured National Football League Chief Financial Officer Joe Siclare and attorney Cliff Ennico, an adviser to entrepreneurs and host of the popular television program, *MoneyHunt*.

The Executive Speakers Series provides unique opportunities to hear directly from some of the most influential experts in the fields of economics, business, and finance. ■ - L.G.

News Lines

Got stats?

As experts mine data to track diseases, monitor intelligence, and manage business, the Ernest C. Trefz School of Business expands programs in Analytics Intelligence.



Geeks, it seems, finally have their day.

Those number-crunchers, statisticians, computer scientists, and others who can mine numbers, harness data, and identify patterns where mere mortals see a foggy morass of data are in high demand these days. From NGOs to Wall Street, institutions are increasingly relying on pros to scrutinize millions of data points, not only to learn from past events, but also to anticipate best practices for the future. By the end of this year, in fact, Gartner Group anticipates that 4.4 million jobs will have been created around data, and the boom is expected to continue.

In response, the Ernest C. Trefz School of Business has expanded two initiatives for their MBA concentration in Analytics Intelligence: a new academic collaboration with SAS, a leading provider of analytics software, and a new online offering starting in the fall of 2016. The programs are under the direction of Trefz School Senior Lecturer Mike Lohle.

“Whether predicting an election outcome, analyzing data to enhance the performance of a professional sports team, racing to contain disease outbreaks, analyzing the social networks of suspected criminals and terrorists, improving operational and supply-chain effectiveness, or perceiving customer purchase intentions for improved marketing campaigns, the opportunity for using information to propel enterprises forward is unlimited,” said Lohle.

The MBA concentration in Analytics Intelligence is a one-year track that provides candidates with a foundational understanding of capturing, analyzing, and then leveraging data that are invaluable to developing business strategies.

The new online offering will enable students to “experience working in a virtual environment similar to those they will encounter on the job. We’re also excited to engage students who can’t meet with us in Bridgeport,” Lohle added. ■ - L.G.

Enter, Stage Left!

Student and costume designer Vaughn Sims teams up with the New Paradigm Theatre for a summer production starring Broadway stars and Bridgeport kids.

Where others see trash—carpet remnants and burlap, yellowed newspapers, a bag of discarded ties—UB student Vaughn Sims sees resplendent capes, dresses, and other one-of-a-kind theater costumes that can be constructed out of recycled materials.

Sims's unique vision, and his talent as a fashion designer, is now helping to support a program that this summer will cast in-need children and teenagers from Bridgeport to work with Broadway veterans in the play *Oliver! A Reinvented*, a multi-ethnic, multi-gendered, and multi-generational take on Dickens's classic tale of a hard-scrabble orphan.

The play, which runs this August 20-21 at Fairfield Theater Company, is being produced by the New Paradigm Theater (NPT) in collaboration with Greater Bridgeport Council of Churches.

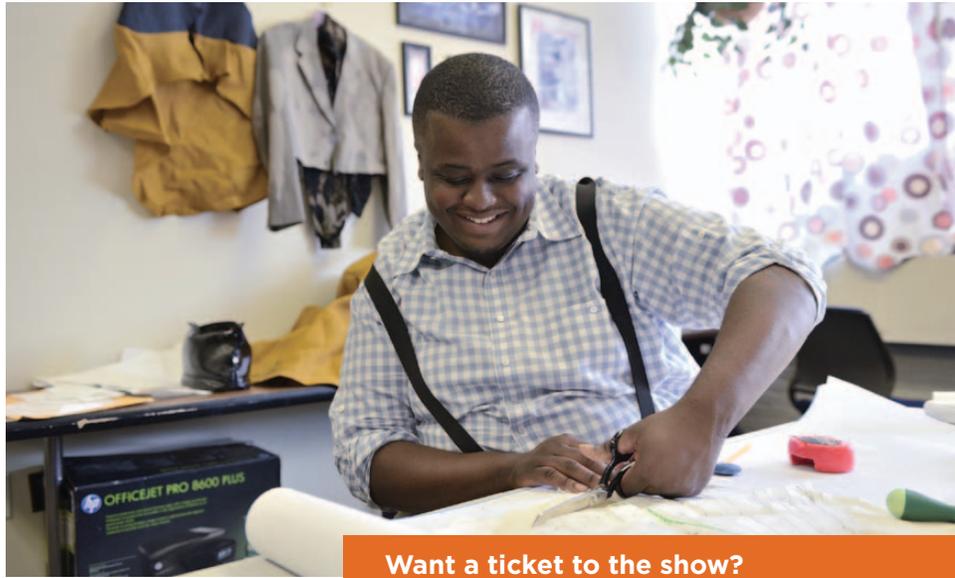
The goal: to produce an ovation-worthy play while providing an opportunity for students who cannot afford pricey summer enrichment programs to participate in a high-quality acting program—sort of like Oliver himself.

To help students participate, NPT asked Sims to create costumes that could be used both in the play as well as a benefit fashion show, which raised funds for two theater scholarships.

"We can't think of anything more appropriate than casting at-risk children and teenagers as actors in this play. Like fictional Oliver, they can personally relate to the deprivations of hunger, poverty, violence and other social justice issues that are portrayed in the play," said NPT President and Producing Artistic Director Kristen Huffman.

After putting out the word that she needed a costume designer, Huffman was introduced to Sims.

"I was really impressed," she said. "Vaughn has brilliantly transformed unused trash into gorgeous, one-of-a-kind theater ensembles to help us produce a hip, current, and socially-relevant



**Want a ticket to the show?
Go to www.nptheatre.org!**

Oliver! We're so proud to bring Broadway to the community to shine a spotlight on the Council's work in the Bridgeport community through the actual themes presented in the musical."

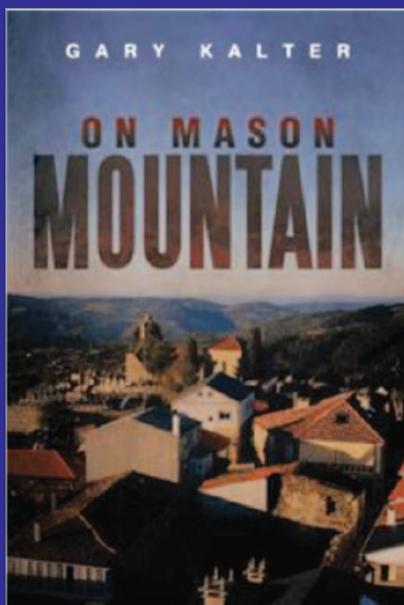
For Sims, a resident of Bridgeport, the prospect of contributing to a play that was innovative and benefitted kids in his hometown community proved to be irresistible.

"It's important to tell a story like Oliver. We all know there are kids like him—kids who are homeless. Who don't have food to eat, but we ignore their story every day. There are things we can do to help," said Sims.

Sims said he decided to make a line of recycled costumes after thinking about Oliver, an impoverished orphan "who has to scavenge to get by."

Oliver! A Reinvented will be directed by Emmy-nominated actor Scott Bryce, whose screen credits include *ER*, *Reba*, *Sex in the City*, and *Homeland*. Award-winning composer Paul Bogaeve (*Chicago*, *Dreamgirls*, *Cats*, *Les Miz*) is music director. ■ - L.G.

Book Lines



What could possibly be worse than the death of a child? Alumnus **Gary Kalter '69** considers the question in his harrowing mystery, *On Mason Mountain* (XLibris), about a cover-up of a massive kidnapping scheme. A group of parents are left reeling after their children is killed in a horrific school bus accident. Years later, an adopted child in Seattle, Washington, begins to have uncontrollable nightmares about being pulled off a bus and drugged. The FBI is called in and finds similarities between the child's nightmare and a criminal syndicate specializing in the abduction and selling of very young children. Things aren't always as they seem in this riveting page-turner.

– Leslie Geary

Faculty Lines



Esoterica for the common man

Sports fans have the NFL, the NHL, and the NBA.

Scholars have the MLA—short for the Modern Language Association. Founded in 1883, the 26,000-member international organization is among the most influential institutions in academia. Its *MLA Handbook* is the preeminent guide to research papers on college campuses nationwide, and the association's annual conferences in the United States attract thousands of academics to debate issues pertaining to grammar, usage, research methodologies, and the exegesis of all manner of text.

So it was “a big deal,” said English professor **Diane Krumrey**, when her UB colleagues **Eric Lehman** and **Amy Nawrocki** were among the chosen few to lead panels at the MLA's Northeast Annual Conference in Hartford, Connecticut, from March 19 to 20.

Nawrocki, an award-winning poet and cat owner, was tapped to lead a panel called “Gimme Shelter: Creative Writing about Rescue Animals.” Her

paper, “Triage: The Language of Animals,” examines how an artistic approach to animal behavior helps us navigate the wild world outside our comfortable shelters.

Lehman, the author of several books about Connecticut history and director of the Creative Writing Program at UB, delivered “The Hartford Wits and the Modern Canon” at a panel dedicated to this often overlooked Connecticut literary group.

“Along with giving our presentations, we attended other panels on subjects as diverse as Mark Twain and post-medieval depictions of food and feast,” Lehman said. “We met other scholars from around the world and talked to publishers and authors about their work.” ■ – **Leslie Geary**

Office of the Provost introduces

Dr. Aaron Perkus joined the University as associate provost effective May 16.

In his new role, he will supervise online programming, serving as the primary liaison to the Connecticut Office of Higher Education (including new program development), organizing program and dean review, furthering prior learning-assessment and articulation agreements, and supporting the Office of the Provost in a range of additional areas.

Perkus served most recently as associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Fairfield University. He also served as president of the Phi Beta Kappa Zeta chapter of Connecticut and as an assistant professor in the Department of English. Previously, he served as the Honors and Writing Coordinator and taught English at Norwalk Community College.

Perkus earned his Bachelor of Arts in Creative Writing and Psychology at Southern Methodist University, and was awarded a master's degree in English and a PhD in Comparative Literature



from Binghamton University.

"Dr. Perkus combines deep experience in the academy with a fresh perspective," said UB Provost **Dr. Stephen Healey**. "He is a welcome addition to UB and the Office of the Provost." ■ - **L.G.**



Award for Dr. Pallis

Dr. Jani Macari Pallis, an associate professor of mechanical engineering, has won the Connecticut Technology Council's Women of Innovation Award for Academic Innovation and Leadership.

The award was announced at the Women of Innovation awards gala in April. It is held annually to recognize women in Connecticut who are accomplished in science, technology, engineering, math (STEM) and who are involved in their community.

The Academic Innovation and Leadership category that Pallis won included

eight finalists from Yale University, University of Connecticut, Wesleyan University, and other schools.

Dr. Pallis received the award for her "devotion of 30 years to reaching pre-college students and teachers, engineering colleagues, university students, and informal educators with her innovative, creative curriculum and projects."

Dr. Pallis has received over \$1.5 million in grants solely focused on curriculum development and outreach. ■ - **L.G.**

Faculty Lines



Entrepreneur, intrapreneur

It's one of business' biggest ironies: in this Era of the Entrepreneur, individuals with drive, talent, creativity and other traits needed to successfully chart their own course often box themselves into flying solo. Instead, they might want to consider becoming intrapreneurs—entrepreneurs within a larger company, says Trefz School of Business Senior Lecturer **Elena Cahill**.

“Working within a larger institution may enable you to use its resources to develop a program or service,” says Cahill, who directs the University’s new Student Entrepreneur Center (SEC).

Cahill has been spreading the word

about intrapreneurships at the Fairfield Public Library, where this spring she was invited to discuss the differences between entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs. As she told attendees who heard her presentation, plenty of companies are eager to hire and reward intrapreneurs.

Moreover, intrapreneurs can enjoy many benefits and rewards of owning their own company without having to contend with the stress of building a business from the ground up.

In addition to running UB’s entrepreneur center, Cahill is managing partner of Globele Energy, an energy-conservation and generation consulting company.

■ - L.G.

All in the name of science

It was nothing less than a group effort when UB School of Education professors **Joanna Badara** and **Nelson Ngoh**, **Buket Barkana** and **Navarun Gupta** (from UB School of Engineering), Arts & Sciences professor **Maria Gherasimova**, and Columbia University science and education professor Fernand Brunschwing joined forces at UB on March 19 in the name of science.

The group created an innovative three-hour professional development workshop specifically for 13 science teachers from Connecticut and New York City that was the result of a new partnership between UB and STEMTeachersNYC. It was the second time they’ve run the program. Their first workshop for state science teachers was held last fall.

The campaign is part of the National Science Foundation grant for science-

teacher education research that Badara and her UB collaborators have worked on for the past two years. Their mission: to develop a program to recruit and train science teachers in high-need

urban schools. The effort also involves helping educators teach physical science more effectively in order to increase student performance and interest in the physical sciences. ■ - L.G.



Getting the word out

In over 25 years as a marketing guru, she's won dozens upon dozens of awards for helping brand-name corporations, politicians, medical firms, and even zoos get their message out. Now UB Mass Communications Senior Lecturer **Susan Katz** has extended her reach by helping a United Nations NGO create a special branding-and-marketing campaign for young people.

Katz tapped UB students in her Publicity Methods class to create a pro-bono campaign for the Committee on Teaching about the United Nations, which promotes global awareness in schools. The slick, multiplatform venture included smartphone apps, press releases and other printed collateral, proposed Web designs, and more. UN officials were so impressed they presented Katz and her students **Michael Handschin, Shamare Holmes,** and **Cristian Cuatzo** with a Special Recognition Award at the United Nations in Manhattan.



"It was a unique opportunity for my students," said Katz. "They got hands-on, real-world experience creating a campaign for this vital organization. It's stellar portfolio material."

Katz is also the Creative Director of Katzing Creative Ways, a high-end media production boutique. ■ - L.G.

Cisco award

Tarik El Taib, adjunct professor of Computer Science and Engineering, has been honored by the Cisco Instruction Excellence Award program for the 2015 calendar year. The expert-level awards recognize high-performing instructors whose exceptional teaching helps to create effective, impactful programming for their students.

El Taib teaches online courses that allow students to qualify as a Cisco Certified Network Associate or Cisco Certified Network Professional.

After three years of teaching over 400 students, he was recognized for his active participation in profes-



sional development, close attention to student needs, and high student performance.

"The certification provides many opportunities for our students to work in IT," said El Taib. ■ - L.G.

Faculty Lines

Dean honored



College of Naturopathic Medicine
Dr. Marcia Prenguber is feeling the love from her alma mater: in May, the University of Saint Joseph presented her with the Mary Consuela Mulcahy Award for her achievements in the field of science at its 2016 Distinguished Alumni Awards Dinner.

Prenguber is one of a few naturopathic physicians who have achieved the designation of a Distinguished Fellow of the American Board of Naturopathic Oncology. A leader in the field of naturopathic medicine, she lectures nationally and internationally on a variety of topics, including cancer-risk reduction,

naturopathic and integrative-cancer care, and women's health. Her focus on prevention, diet, and optimal health is part of her work to develop a treatment plan that empowers her patients to live healthfully

"The Distinguished Alumna Award is such an unexpected honor. I was inspired by so many people who served as role models; I feel each one deserves a piece of the award," said Prenguber. "I have had the good fortune to learn and to work in a variety of settings where people care about the work they do, and encourage those around them to pay it forward." ■ - **L.G.**

Caring for younger patients

It's not uncommon for young patients to seek help for gynecologic problems like pelvic pain, ambiguous genitalia, and menstrual irregularities, but too often care providers are not adequately prepared to help. That's where Physician Assistant Institute Adjunct Professor **Dr. Alla Vash-Margita** comes in. This spring she spoke with second-year PAI students about pediatric and adolescent gynecology.

"It's not taught well at medical schools and medical residencies, although the gap is starting to close: the medical establishment is realizing that such training is essential," says Vash-Margita, an obstetrician-gynecologist who does clinical work at Yale-New Haven Hospital.

Although not broadly taught, the field can have a far-ranging impact on patients' health. For example, young pa-

tients who are diagnosed with leukemia can now start onco-fertility preservation programs to ensure they can have children later in life.

PAI Clinical Director **Isabel Broder-son** agrees. "One of the teaching points in PA programs is women's health. Adolescent/pediatric gynecology is an area that is often under-taught, so I thought it was important for Dr. Vash to teach her expertise in this area." ■ - **L.G.**



Focus on: Manish Chowdhary '00



“Following your dreams requires you to deviate sometimes from the conventional norm.”

Background: Neither one of Manish Chowdhary’s parents attended high school or college, but they firmly believed in the power of education. So when Chowdhary turned four, they sent him to live with relatives 1000 miles from home to attend school. After graduating from Bishop Cotton Boys School in Bangalore, India, Chowdhary attended the Manipal Institute of Technology. In 1997, he transferred to UB as a scholarship student to major in Computer Science and Engineering. To earn much-needed cash, Chowdhary began reassembling computers and selling them to fellow students. As sales took off, his need to more effectively run his business prompted him to create e-commerce management systems. They became the foundation for GoECart, the company Chowdhary founded in room 816 in Bodine Hall and continues to guide today as its CEO.

Recent accomplishments: Under Chowdhary’s leadership, GoECart has delivered solid double-digit growth year over year, all while staying profitable since inception. In 2013, *Fairfield County Business Journal* presented Chowdhary with its annual 40 under 40 Award for his extraordinary leadership, ongoing commitment to professional development, and outstanding accomplishments in the business sector. The company is a four-time winner of the CQIA Gold Innovation Prize (2004, 2012, 2013, and 2014) and winner of a Stevie Award for Best Customer Service, Computer Science (2013). Most recently, GoECart was named a Bronze Stevie® Award winner in the Company of the Year category at the 2015 American Business Awards. Chowdhary received a Distinguished Alumni Award from UB in 2013. In May, the University presented him

with an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters. In September 2015, Chowdhary and his wife became the proud parents of their first child, a son, named Jeet Alexander.

In your address to graduates this year you said, “Your talent and your intelligence don’t play nearly as big of a role as you might think.” How and when did you reach that conclusion?

I grew up seeing my parents, my uncles, everyone around me working really, really hard. Neither one of my parents attended high school. They didn’t have any formal education, and certainly no money for higher education. They were business people. Right after I was born, my dad migrated to a different part of the country to start his own business from scratch. It was salt manufacturing—edible salt. My family was in the

(continued on page 34)

Focus on: Manish Chowdhary '00

salt-trading business in northern India. They used to buy salt from other manufacturers. My dad felt that if my uncles could do trading, he could be the manufacturer to supply the salt to his own. He basically moved us 2000 miles across the country to a completely arid village because salt is manufactured in the most difficult environmental conditions. It corrupts the soil. There is no vegetation. It's isolated, remote. The nearest railway station was 100 kilometers—like 60 miles away. When he had to travel and take an early morning train, there were no buses. He couldn't afford a taxi or auto rickshaw, so he took the bus the night before and spent the night in the railway station in order to catch the early morning train. When you come from that background, how hard I work is nothing compared to that. Hard work is ingrained in our DNA.

Even so, have you ever been tempted to give up? I feel like giving up every evening after I'm done with a very hard day. Everyone is human, and after a struggle, you feel worn out and down in the dumps. That's perfectly OK. The key is how do you bounce back? Surrounding yourself with positive people—that's very important. It's one of the best things you can do. I'm lucky to have a family that encourages me.

How do you create that positive energy among your employees at GoECart? I believe in catching people doing the right things as opposed to doing something wrong. I'm always on the prowl to find someone doing something that we believe in. Part of our core values is making sure we reinforce and praise people for doing the right things as opposed to looking for opportunities to reprimand.

As a boss, how do you help people cultivate grit and determination when they're faced with setbacks? I think you have to have high standards of excellence and not compromise on them. When you set very high standards, you're never settling. You're not going to doubt yourself or what you're doing. You remind people that success never comes overnight. Every overnight success you hear of took a decade. The media loves to portray people as overnight

“I'm always on the prowl to find someone doing something that we believe in. Part of our core values is making sure we reinforce and praise people for doing the right things as opposed to looking for opportunities to reprimand.”

successes, but go behind the scenes and you'll see how success is really accomplished. It's also about managing expectations. For every one Mark Zuckerberg, there were 900 just as smart or smarter individuals who failed. Don't start with an expectation of overnight success.

Any pivotal lessons or moments from your time at UB that you draw upon today? Going to Saturday morning classes [at the UB campus in Stamford] with engineering Professor [Ausif] Mahmood allowed me to propel my profes-

sional career long before others could. He was kind and generous to allow me to sit in on his classes. Most college students are not looking to drive 30 miles to sit in on a computer programming class early on a Saturday morning. I took a lot of heat from my friends for doing it. 'Why aren't you hanging out with us?' But I knew if I didn't do it for myself, no one else would. I couldn't fall back on my parents or anyone else. It's OK to be different. It's OK not to succumb to peer pressure, but you have to have confidence. Most of us are social creatures. We don't want to be singled out, but following your dreams requires you to deviate sometimes from the conventional norm.

So you drove down to sit in on graduate-level courses? That's another story. When I got to UB, I didn't have a car. All international students want to quickly get on-campus jobs. But even for those, you need connections. Because I didn't have as many friends, I wasn't as popular. I didn't have the connections, and I didn't get an on-campus job. So I thought, 'I'll focus all my time and energy on vocational stuff.' I applied to just about every large company in the area. I sent out 200 résumés and cover letters, licking the stamps and envelopes, following up with email. I really, really wanted a professional opportunity, even to the point where I was telling people, 'Hey, I'm willing to work for free. Just allow me the opportunity to learn in a professional environment.' I got a paid internship in the Research and Development Department at UPS in Danbury, but I had no car. Getting to Danbury was very difficult. I'd hitch a ride to and back from friends. They were very generous and kind about giving me rides. But if my ride wanted to play soccer, if they

had to leave, I had to play soccer. Eventually, I was able to save up and buy a car and drive down to Stamford to attend Professor Mahmood's class.

We streamed graduation ceremonies live for the first time ever this year.

Where were your parents, and did they watch you give the Commencement Address? Any feedback?

They were extremely proud. This is the closest they've ever been to my graduation. I graduated from elementary, middle, from high school, and I've gone to technical college and graduated from UB. They couldn't be there for any one of them. This is the first time they've witnessed live when I've received an award. It was the first time they could be there in the moment. It was amazing! I was not expecting this to happen. There's nothing like them being able to see it. I could not have recreated that moment.

“My dad . . . moved us 2000 miles across the country to a completely arid village because salt is manufactured in the most difficult environmental conditions.”

GoECart has been a run-away success.

Did you have any idea what you were creating?

When I told friends what I was doing, they thought I had two heads. ‘This is a great hobby while you're in school, but once you graduate you'll find a job.’ That sort of thing. But I was serious. Once I started, I didn't want to give



it up. We had 9/11 after that. It was horrible. The business conditions were very tough. I had to move back into Cooper Hall for two years as a way to stay lean to ride out the rough times. I was single. I was very young. I figured, ‘I'll move back and we'll go from there.’

It would have been easy, perhaps, for you to locate the business anywhere.

Why stay in Bridgeport? When I initially bought office space in Bridgeport, a lot of my initial employees were UB students. It was convenient for them to walk downtown and come to work. The people I had working for me had roots here, and I didn't want to disrupt that. With the transportation system in the city and UB support, there were advantages to staying, too. There are students I could tap into and UB support. From a travel perspective, the cost structure is much lower than New York City. But I believe you can do great things anywhere. When you're doing great, meaningful work that people want, location is less important.

Your son is seven months old, and he'll be raised with more advantages than you had. Have you thought about how you will balance that so the traits of

hard work and grit remain ingrained in your family DNA?

I think it's a huge responsibility, how we coach and motivate our kids right from an early age, the conversations that take place at the dinner table, the things your kids are watching you do. They are observing! And if you're not a hard worker, how will your kids be any different?

You teach kids grit by getting them to set their own goals and getting them to do something that's hard. It could be learning a musical instrument, something that doesn't come easily to them. That's how you teach them the importance of hard work and deliberate practice. Then, once they learn that, make sure they have something that's harder than what they've accomplished in the past. If they're a great pianist, now they can learn to play soccer. They don't have to be the star player, they just have to challenge themselves. Drive comes from within. Had I not failed as many times as I had, I would not have had the deep hunger to prove to myself that I can actually do it.

— Interview by Leslie Geary

Alumni Lines

Would you like to share news of your own or nominate an alumnus to be interviewed for a "Focus On" interview? We're interested in what you're doing, and so are your classmates! Contact: Knightlines, Cortright Hall, 219 Park Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06604 or knightlines@bridgeport.edu. Be sure to include your full name, contact information, and class year.

1950

Ronald S. Cohen reached out to let us know that he celebrated his 88th birthday on April 15. He graduated with a degree in marketing in 1950. He lived in the PT Barnum House, which was once a residence hall, and served as president of his class. His only other extracurricular activity was "time flirting with the girls, most especially **Jayne Feyer**." Two years after graduating, he was drafted and served in the Korean War.

1953

Harvey L. Seltzer has written a bilingual primer on American history. Titled *Highlights of American History/Aspectos mas Destacados de la Historia Americana*, it's "an interesting, easily readable pictorial and text presentation," he writes. He is presenting the book for consideration to the Los Angeles United School District, to the California Department of

Education, and other states where there are a large portions of non-native English language speakers.

1961

Richard (Dick) Balt writes from Vermont, "I also remember [the late] John Rassias as my French language professor. I enjoyed his classes very much." After graduating from UB, Balt served five years active duty in the Navy. He returned to campus for Welcome Back Weekend, and adds he "enjoyed seeing how much UB grew since I attended and graduated."

1964

Ed Kramer informs us that he has joined Treliant Risk Advisors as a member of its Senior Advisory Board. He will help clients coordinate their risk-management

strategy and enhance their compliance with banking and lending regulations.

Kramer has worked directly with senior-level risk and compliance executives at the nation's top banks and lending organizations. His expertise includes compliance strategy in the context of the Community Reinvestment Act, Home Mortgage Disclosure Act, fair lending, and anti-money laundering measures, including the Bank Secrecy Act. He is a former executive vice president of Regulatory Affairs at Wolters Kluwer Financial Services.

1979

Anthony Foster recently earned his PhD in Counseling at Florida Atlantic University. He currently is CFO of the Treatment Center of the Palm Beaches.

In Memoriam

1929

Helen Liskov, UB's oldest living alumna, passed away on May 26 at age 104. She earned her master's at UB and graduated in 1929 as a member of the University's first graduating class. In 2004, UB honored her with a Distinguished Alumni Award for her commitment to and work on behalf of education, children's welfare, and women's rights.

1937

John Taylor passed away on February 26, 2016. Mr. Taylor, who retired from the House-keeping Department in 1999, was a valued employee of UB for more than 30 years.

Members from the Class of 1966 participated in Commencement ceremonies and were honored as Golden Knights on the 50th anniversary of their UB graduation.

Alumnus Dennis Bollier '66 wears his class ring with pride!



From top left: UB Trustee Art Landi '74, host of the 2016 SASD Alumni Design Event, with guests Elly and Glenn Fujii.

David Kaiser '76, president of Spark Design LLC, seated on the UB chair he received after being honored with the SASD Lifetime Achievement Award. SASD graphic design chairperson Emily Larned (fourth from left) with students who exhibited at the SASD Alumni Design Event.



Right: Al "Coyote" Weiner was one of 20 artists who exhibited at the fifth annual Alumni Art Show from March 24 to April 9 at the Schelfhault Gallery. This year's show featured an abundant mix of paintings, sculpture, documentary photography, ceramics, video, and mixed media.

Side Lines

One for the Record Books

Purple Knights wow the competition during 2015-2016.

By Chuck Sadowski



The 2015 women's soccer team defeated East Stroudsburg, 2-0, on November 22 at Knights Field to advance UB's first-ever Final Four in Pensacola, Florida.

From its alpha in August, with the start of practice for fall programs, to its omega with the baseball team's first-ever NCAA appearance in May, the 2015-2016 year in University athletics will be one Purple Knights fans will remember a long time.

The year began with the standout achievements of the fall sports programs, led by the record-setting 2015 women's soccer team reaching the NCAA Division II Final Four in Pensacola, Florida, after capturing UB's first-ever East Region title during an all-time best 21-win season. The UB women's volleyball program also

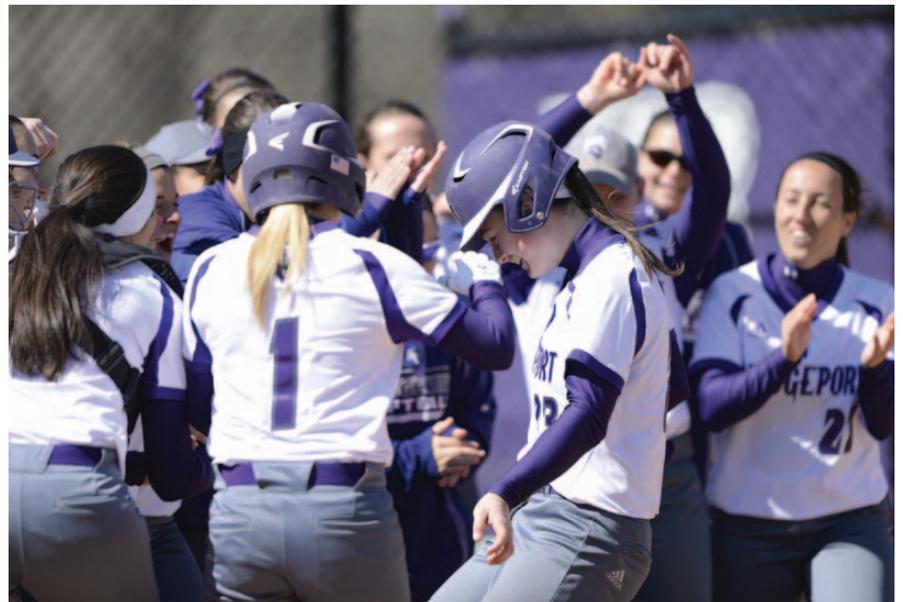


Junior Christine Liautaud earned 2016 ECAC Specialist of the Year accolades, plus a trip to the NCAA Championships, as an individual on the uneven bars. She was also named a Third Team National Academic All-America honoree.

won its fourth straight East Coast Conference (ECC) Championship and advanced to the NCAA East Regional Final for the second consecutive season and the third time in the last four years. The Bridgeport men's soccer program returned to the ECC postseason in 2015 after a one-year hiatus in 2014, following 11 successive trips to the ECC Championship Tournament.

As the fall season overlapped with the beginning of the winter sports campaign, the Department of Athletics hosted an unprecedented number of home events during November, when the Purple Knights were on Knights Field, in Hubbell Gym, or the Wheeler Recreation Center Pool for a whopping 24 events in a ten-day span. Those home events ranged from regular season and ECC tournament volleyball matches, NCAA women's soccer tournament games, a swim meet and a season-opening, men's and women's basketball tournaments, plus a couple of regular season games for those two programs.

Freshman Kadajah Dickson's selection as the ECC's women's basketball Rookie of the Year was one of the many highlights for the winter sports season in the Park City. The UB men's basketball team turned in another winning season and earned a spot in the ECC postseason tournament.



The softball team advanced to the East Coast Conference Championship tournament for the first time since 2008.

Side Lines

The Purple Knights' swimming teams had a fine season in the pool with both the men's and women's programs turning in strong performances at both the Metropolitan Conference Championship and the NCAA National Championship meets. A total of seven swimmers churned their way to All-American honors at the 2016 NCAA Meet.

The UB women's gymnastics team had another banner season in 2016, as the program won its eighth straight ECAC Division II crown and took second place at the USAG National Team Championship for the second consecutive year after winning the national title the six previous seasons. Junior Christine Liautaud, who earned ECAC Division II Specialist of the Year and was one of four UB gymnasts to be selected for the 2016 NCAA Championship, was also honored for her fine performance in the classroom with a spot on the Third Team National Academic All-America At-Large Team selected by College Sports Information Directors of America. A business administration major with a 3.88 grade point average, Liautaud is the fourth Purple Knight in the last three years to earn a spot on the At-Large National Academic All-America squad.

The softball and baseball teams put the finishing touches on the year when the softball team qualified for its first trip to the conference championship tournament since 2008. The baseball team received its first-ever bid to the NCAA Division II National Championship Tournament, led by All-American designated hitter Alnaydo Rodriguez, who set a single-season school record with ten home runs in 2016, and All-Region performers, third baseman Casey McCone and pitcher Rob Anderson. An excellent regular-season showing, plus a second place finish in the ECC Championship Tournament for the fifth time in six years, helped the Bridgeport nine into the NCAA's.

At the 2016 NCAA East Regional, UB baseball was seeded number five out of seven teams, and the Purple Knights posted a 1-2 record in their national postseason debut falling to Felician University in the team's NCAA opener before rebounding to defeat Dowling College and dropping its second elimination game to powerful Southern New Hampshire University. ■





Ten home runs and 41 runs batted in by All-America senior Alnaydo Rodriguez helped propel the baseball team into the program's first-ever NCAA Division II National Championship appearance.



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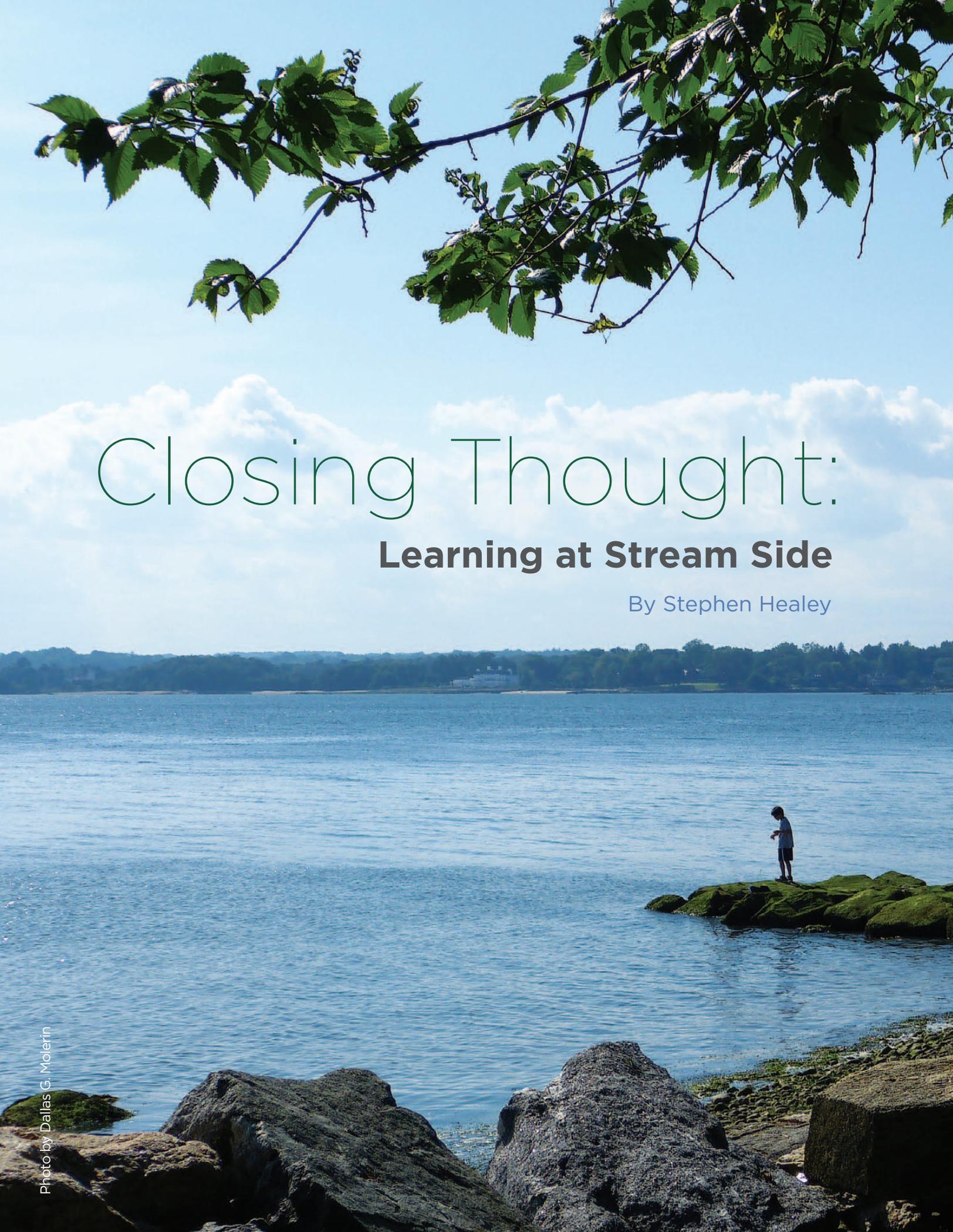
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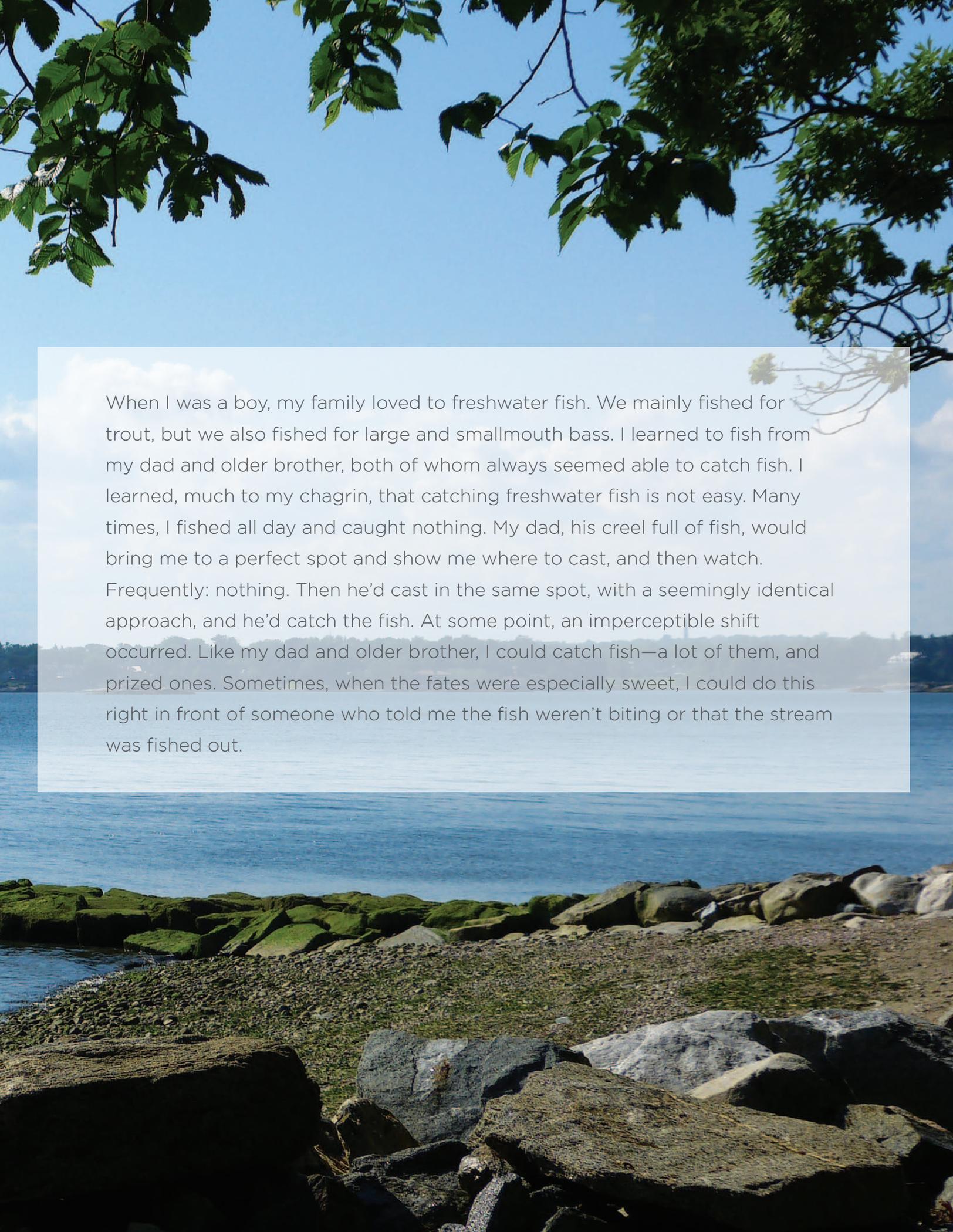
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Closing Thought:

Learning at Stream Side

By Stephen Healey



When I was a boy, my family loved to freshwater fish. We mainly fished for trout, but we also fished for large and smallmouth bass. I learned to fish from my dad and older brother, both of whom always seemed able to catch fish. I learned, much to my chagrin, that catching freshwater fish is not easy. Many times, I fished all day and caught nothing. My dad, his creel full of fish, would bring me to a perfect spot and show me where to cast, and then watch. Frequently: nothing. Then he'd cast in the same spot, with a seemingly identical approach, and he'd catch the fish. At some point, an imperceptible shift occurred. Like my dad and older brother, I could catch fish—a lot of them, and prized ones. Sometimes, when the fates were especially sweet, I could do this right in front of someone who told me the fish weren't biting or that the stream was fished out.

I had become a fisherman.

Learning is a lot like this. Learning is hard, and the process of acquiring knowledge is hidden. Learning can be tedious. The mind craves greater rewards than the learning process affords. Toil does not lead to immediate skill; the approach to the subject lends limited insight; questions outnumber the answers. Learning also presents us with masters of the craft. Masters of the craft are like my dad casting upstream against the wind, settling their bait into the perfect spot, and landing a four-pound brown trout. These masters make it look easy, and they are so good they share opportunities freely, but those newer to the craft still can't match their performance. In education, these masters teach engineering, mathematics, music, health care, business, design, education, or politics. They understand relationships, histories, meaning systems, power structures, the function of bodies, and symbols—all those things that combine to control and shape us and our world. When we take steps to learn these things, there are times when effort seems to go unrewarded, or we fail to recognize the progress we have made—then transformation occurs. We begin to master a new approach, or we become more confident. We lay down foundations for a life of achievement.

Writing is a lot like this, too. A blank page is easy to leave blank, and much effort can be expanded with little or nothing to show. I remember fishing in late spring when the sun could be surprisingly, almost punishingly intense. Fishing gear is heavy, and wading boots, designed to keep water out, are equally good at keeping dampness in. On those days, the mind has a way of suggesting it's time to quit. Sit over there. Go to the car. Have a snack. Drift . . . drift. My dad was not a patient man, and for him the recreation of fishing required an almost religious dedication. You either take it seriously or not at all. If he saw me drifting, he'd yell to get my attention. I'd be back at the task. Over time, I learned to bring myself back to task, and it was just about this time that my fishing improved. Writing sentences and paragraphs is hard, and organizing our thinking is harder still. As we perfect this craft, our minds will drift. The best, most prized sentences will go uncaught. The best ideas, the best essays, the most creative approaches—those come to

the disciplined who constantly bring themselves back to task.

Innovation is a form of fishing, too. So is entrepreneurship, business, teaching, healing, designing, experimenting, composing. All of these means of creating something combine form, discipline, and skill with a degree of randomness, expectancy, and uncertainty. The fish is there, or it isn't. The cast is perfect, or it's askew. The moment comes, or it passes unfulfilled. Fishing taught me that reward is sweeter when it's not guaranteed. The suddenly urgent feeling of catching a trout awakens an already awakened mind, let alone one that had drifted into oblivion.

Learning is hard, and the process of acquiring knowledge is hidden. Learning can be tedious. The mind craves greater rewards than the learning process affords. Toil does not lead to immediate skill; the approach to the subject lends limited insight; questions outnumber the answers.

This experience holds a richness that is hard to convey. Learning, writing, and skills development can be like this, too. With consistent seeking, a moment of deep learning comes. A complex relationship becomes clear. A new product is envisioned. A new way of seeing.

As the University's provost, my hope is that our students experience learning in this fashion—and that our alumni found opportunities for such growth when they were here. I want our students to become more self-aware and more self-confident. Achieving this vision requires being patient with those in the early stages and helping masters of the craft share their learning. In sum, that's what the provost's job is. My inspiration comes in part from the streamside. As I see it, the rewards are many, and the fish are always out there. ■



Stephen Healey is the University's provost and vice president for academic affairs. He hails from Philipsburg, Pennsylvania, and grew up splashing through streams and finding his way through the woods. From the great beyond, his dad says if you make that cast, throw it downstream. But Steve saw him do it just as described.



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