

RESEARCH | INNOVATION | SCHOLARSHIP | ENTREPRENEURSHIP

# UBRISE



**FRIDAY, MARCH 24, 2023**

**8:30 A.M. - 4:00 P.M. | JOHN J. COX STUDENT CENTER**



**UNIVERSITY OF  
BRIDGEPORT**



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## Keynote Speaker

### Creating Opportunities for Prosperity: Building a Cohesive and Inclusive Workforce Development Ecosystem



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#### **Kelli-Marie Vallieres, Ph.D.**

Chief Workforce Officer / Commissioner  
State of CT Office of Workforce Strategy  
Vice Chair Governor's Workforce Council

Kelli-Marie Vallieres, Ph.D., is Vice Chair of the Governor's Workforce Council and the Chief Workforce Officer for the Office of Workforce Strategy. The Office of Workforce Strategy leads the implementation of the first State of CT Strategic Workforce Development Plan.

The business-led plan requires the coordination, collaboration, and cooperation of multiple stakeholders (including workforce development boards, state agencies, education, and economic and community-based organizations) to build the systems, teams, and approaches that will make Connecticut an environment that attracts and motivates students, career builders, and companies alike.

Dr. Vallieres earned her degree in Educational Leadership and Adult Learning from the University of Connecticut in 2007. She is an owner of two manufacturing companies, where she served as President and CEO for 14 years before moving on to her new role with the State of Connecticut. Kelli combines her roles in industry and education to carry out the mission of the Governor's Workforce Council Strategic Plan.



## Afternoon Oral Presentations

### The Sage on the Stage Should Drink the Hemlock – UDL Theory and Practice

The entire higher education experience has to be turned on its head because students' experiences are too **transactional** instead of being **transformational**. Utilizing Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles, as well as competency-based education, is an excellent way to do this. The panel will share their takeaways as UDL cohort completers. Students must be engaged in creating career-oriented goals and develop self-assessment and reflection skills. Professors should offer alternatives to lectures and oral presentation in order to facilitate information processing and visualization. Faculty should institute graduated levels of support and practice using a combination of formative and summative assessments which will enhance students' capacity to self-monitor progress.





## Afternoon Oral Presentations

### The Sage on the Stage Should Drink the Hemlock – UDL Theory and Practice



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#### **Latoya Maxwell, MSN,**

is the RN-BC-Lab/Simulation Coordinator and an Assistant Professor at the School of Nursing. She has expertise in medical-surgical nursing, stroke, and dementia care. She is a member of Sigma Theta Tau, the National League for Nurses, and the American Nurses Association. She graduated from the College of New Rochelle with a BSN and Sacred Heart University with a MSN with a focus in Nursing Education. For over six years she was a Registered Nurse at a Magnet Hospital, where she worked diligently to care for vulnerable patient populations. During this time, she developed a love for mentoring and teaching new nurses. She joined UB in the Fall of 2021. An advocate of continuous learning, she is passionate about nursing education and enjoys assisting nursing students on their educational journey.



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#### **Elizabeth Haas, Ph.D.,**

is a film and literature scholar and Assistant Professor in the English department, where she has helped to build our new Film, Television, and Digital Media minor and has created new courses such as Shakespeare at the Movies. She is also Director of General Education Seminars and Chair of UB's Honors Program.



## Afternoon Oral Presentations

### The Sage on the Stage Should Drink the Hemlock – UDL Theory and Practice



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#### **Randy Laist, Ph.D.,**

is a professor of English with a dual appointment at Goodwin University and UB. He is the author of *Technology and Postmodern Subjectivity in Don DeLillo's Novels*, *Cinema of Simulation: Hyperreal Hollywood in the Long 1990s*, and *The Twin Towers in Film: A Cinematic History of the World Trade Center*. He has also edited several books of academic essays, including *UDL University: Designing for Variability across the Postsecondary Curriculum*.



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#### **Annjanette Bennar, M.Ed.,**

Her teaching career spans over 20 years and includes both secondary and higher education setting. She obtained a master's of Education from the University of New Haven and 6th year certificate in Educational Leadership from CCSU. She is currently pursuing her doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction. She just completed the advanced UDL training and is now a Senior Teaching Fellow of UDL. She recently authored a chapter in the book, *UDL University: Designing for Variability Across the Postsecondary Curriculum*.



## Afternoon Oral Presentations

### The Sage on the Stage Should Drink the Hemlock – UDL Theory and Practice



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#### **Ellen Swider, Ed.D.,**

is the Director of the History, Humanities, and Spanish departments as well as two undergraduate degree programs at Goodwin University. Ellen graduated from UConn with her bachelor's and master's degrees in History and Social Studies Education, before earning her doctorate in Higher Education Leadership at the University of Hartford last spring.

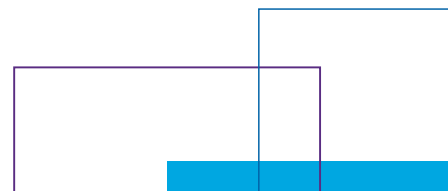
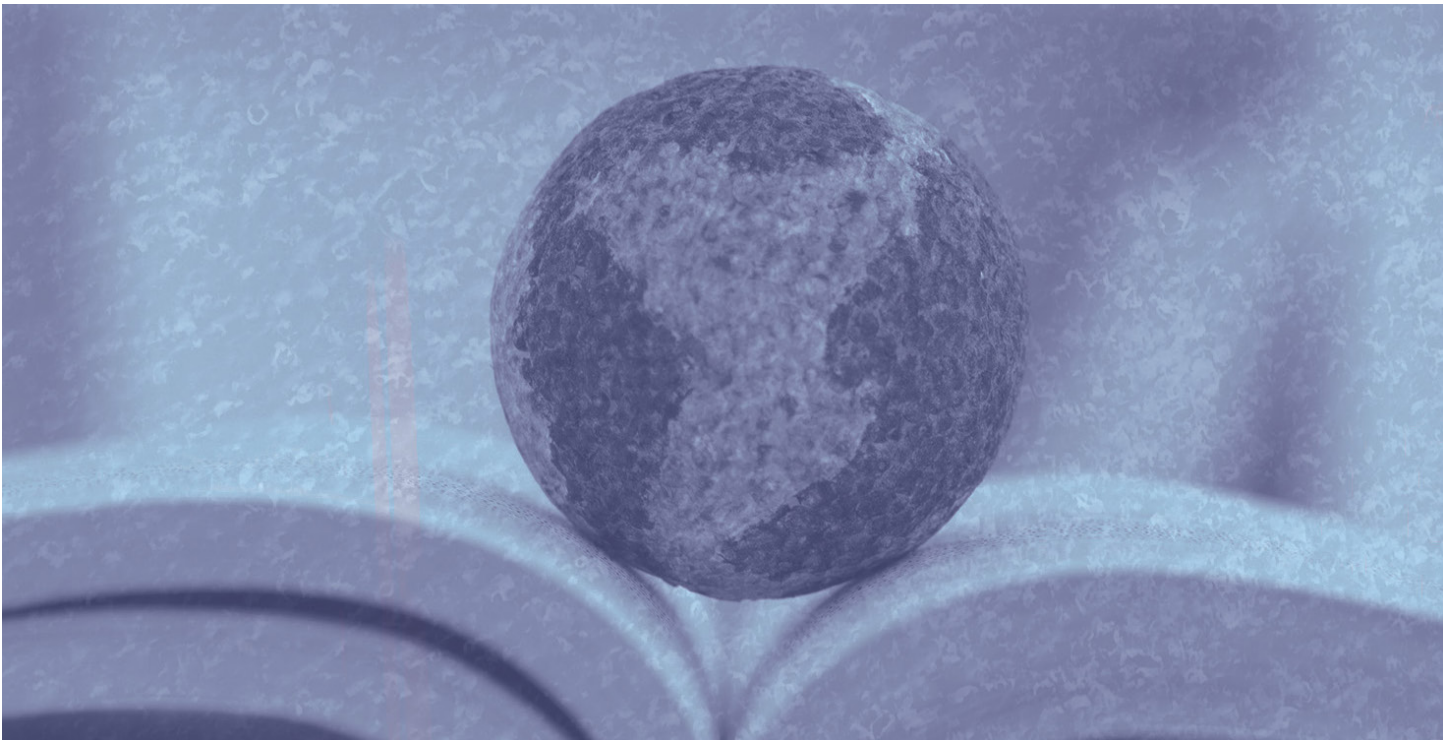
Her dissertation explored the on-campus lactation support available to undergraduate student-parents and the perceived impact that access (and the lack thereof) has on their academic programs. As an educator, Ellen enjoys designing curricula that capitalize on prior student learning and emphasize creative activities. Her interests first emerged during her career as a middle school and adult education teacher, but her experience with UDL has helped her fine-tune those skills for the college classroom.



## **From Micro to Macro: How UB's Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program is Changing Bridgeport and the United States**

The field of clinical mental health counseling is one of the fastest growing areas of human services. The UB Clinical Mental Health Counseling (UB CMHC) program is on the front lines of supporting a diverse student body to meet the needs of various populations. The UB CMHC program has obtained a HRSA grant to better support the learning experiences of our students, who will in turn work to promote mental health equity in underserved CT areas.

While this is happening, UB is also on the front lines of changing and supporting national legislation specifically the Counseling Compact and recent Medicare Billing acceptance for clinical mental health counselors within the Omnibus Legislation Package. This presentation will review how the UB CMHC program is helping students, improving CT, leading national change, and increasing access to treatment for millions across the US.





## From Micro to Macro: How UB's Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program is Changing Bridgeport and the United States



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### **Fredrick Dombrowski, Ph.D.,**

is an Assistant Professor in the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program. He is the AMHCA President and has extensive experience treating those living with co-occurring disorders since 1998. He has been a supervisor and director for multiple programs including inpatient, outpatient, and forensic treatment. As the Chair of Social Science at UB, he is focused on experiential learning through a perspective of cultural humility and equitable clinical care.

He has recently published the book *Co-occurring Mental Illness and Substance Use Disorders* and has appeared on television, radio, and the internet advocating for the helping professions. He has won several awards for his work with marginalized populations.



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### **Sergeant Juliet Taylor ('19 & '21),**

obtained a BA in Business Administration and Management, General and an MS in Clinical Health Counseling (LPC-A). Sgt. Taylor enlisted in the US Army from 2002-2014. She served honorably both stateside and overseas, including tours in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom II and Operation Enduring Freedom. Her awards and decorations include an Army Commendation medal, Good Conduct medal, and Reserve Component Achievement medal.

She received a Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary medal and Service medal, as well as distinctions like the Non-Commission Professional Development ribbon and Army Service Ribbon. She is currently employed at the CT Veteran Legal Center as the Intake and Program Access Specialist, working with veterans recovering from homelessness and mental illness overcome legal barriers to housing, healthcare, and income.

She continues to serve her community through several non profit organizations: Am Vet, Post 43; DAV Chapter 13; CT State Commander for the Disabled American Veteran; Operation Gift Cards Advisory Council; Female Soldier Forgotten Heroes, Home for the Braves in Bridgeport, and VFW Post 10059 Trumbull. Sgt. Taylor is very instrumental in leading several veteran fundraising events, as well as veteran recognition annual events, and empowers her civilian counterparts by fostering patriotism and citizenship.





# UB Federal Grants Foster Student Achievement and Experiences of a Lifetime

Federal grants UB receives provide students with opportunities to develop research-related skills, connect to professionals, and build confidence to achieve an intellectually demanding STEM career. Drs. Jani Macari Pallis and Buket Barkana bring in federal dollars to provide UB graduate and undergraduate engineering and computer science students with hands-on experiences participating in projects that enhance their research, problem-solving, and communications skills. Additionally, students develop their engineering identity and professional community. Dr. Pallis’s projects offer students opportunities to apply their skills to underwater and flight vehicles. Dr. Barkana’s NSF grant offers students opportunities to work on multiple research projects like computer vision, artificial intelligence, biosignal processing, and unmanned aerial vehicles.





## UB Federal Grants Foster Student Achievement and Experiences of a Lifetime



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### **Buket Barkana, Ph.D.,**

is a professor of Electrical Engineering and Director of the Signal Processing Research Group. She received a B.Sc. degree in Electrical and Electronics Engineering from Anadolu University. Then, she received her M.Sc. and Ph.D. from Eskisehir Osmangazi University (ESOGU), Turkey. She was a full-time faculty member at Anadolu University and at the ESOGU before she joined UB in 2007. She has developed and taught undergraduate and graduate-level courses in electrical, computer, and biomedical engineering.

Since 2019, she has also been teaching online electronics and information engineering at Wuhan University of Science and Technology, China. Her research interests include many aspects of signal processing, including biomedical image processing, computer-aided diagnosis systems, electroencephalography and their applications in machine learning, audio and speech processing, context-aware applications, speaker recognition, human-computer interaction systems, and innovations in engineering education.

I.T. constantly evolves around diverse and multidisciplinary teams. She has received two federal grants from NSF to improve engineering and STEM education for underrepresented and underserved students. She has published 100+ research papers in peer-reviewed journals and conferences. She is an Associate Editor of *Computational Intelligence, An International Journal* (Wiley), and has served on the technical committees of many national/international conferences. She is a member of IEEE Women in Engineering, NSF INCLUDES National Network, and Sigma Xi.



## UB Federal Grants Foster Student Achievement and Experiences of a Lifetime



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### Jani Macari Pallis, Ph.D.,

is an Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering and CEO of Cislunar Aerospace, Inc., an engineering and research firm she founded while she was a graduate student. With a background as a biomedical, industrial, mechanical, and aeronautical engineer, she specializes in fluid dynamics with an emphasis on air, space, and marine vehicles, and sports equipment. Her current research focuses on Near Space flight, small satellites, submarines, and un-crewed underwater vehicles (UUV). She received her BS and MS degrees from the Georgia Institute of Technology, an MS in Mechanical Engineering from the University of California at Berkeley, and a Ph.D. in Mechanical and Aeronautical Engineering from the University of California, Davis.

In 2022, Dr. Pallis was UB's Outstanding Faculty Award recipient. Her projects include: making a one-person submarine that is remote controlled (Department of the Navy grant for \$600k); building and deploying a very small satellite (5-gram payload) which will land on the surface of the Moon (NASA GLEE Project where UB is 1 of 213 worldwide teams submitting a project); observing the 2023 annular solar eclipse and 2024 total solar eclipse (NASA award to Montana as the lead \$6-\$7M and UB will receive \$23k in Year 1 and \$167k for years 2-4); and scheduling the STEM Bus with UB students delivering educational STEM content to K-12 schools.



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### Michael Afolabi ('23)

is currently completing a master's degree in Mechanical Engineering. He is a member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) and the Vice President of UB's Aerospace Club. He began his engineering journey six years ago as an undergraduate student at Oral Roberts University with the goal to utilize his skills and abilities to make a positive impact on the world.

His passion for mechanical design and analysis has only grown stronger and he wants to continue using the knowledge and skills he has gained at UB. As a member of UB's Extreme Environments Lab, Michael is the student lead on the Office of Naval Research Exploring NUSTEM grant. He develops curriculum and utilizes a variety of technology related to unmanned underwater vehicles. As part of the project, remote control capabilities will be integrated into UB's one-person one-atmosphere submarine, Explorer.



## UB Federal Grants Foster Student Achievement and Experiences of a Lifetime



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### Huy Huang ('25)

is a sophomore and double major in Computer Science and Mathematics with a minor in Music and Physics. As a member of the Extreme Environments Lab, he is the student team leader for UB's NASA Nationwide Eclipse Ballooning Project, which will conduct high altitude ballooning during the 2023 and 2024 USA eclipses. He is also the student team leader for UB's NASA GLEE (Great Lunar Exploration for Everyone) project, which will place a very small payload on the Moon's surface.

He also serves as UB's Aerospace Club President, coordinating student volunteers for our many aerospace project opportunities. He plays multiple musical instruments, performs in a marching band during the academic year, and spends part of his summers with the 7th Regiment Drum and Bugle Corps International (a touring youth performing arts ensemble). Huy hopes to work at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory and is learning about all different aspects of the aerospace industry.



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### Karen Garza ('25)

is a junior pursuing her bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering. She started her undergraduate career as a Biology major, but switched to Engineering after a physics class sparked her interests in thermodynamics and circuit analysis. She is the secretary of UB's chapter of American Society of Mechanical Engineering. She is currently participating in NSF's Project Achieve grant. She works with a team of six students to design 3D printed drones for ASME Innovative Additive Manufacturing Challenge. Outside of school, she enjoys going to concerts or playing her guitar. Her other hobbies include playing hockey and tennis.



## UB Federal Grants Foster Student Achievement and Experiences of a Lifetime



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### Thania Flores Garcia ('21)

is pursuing a master's in Computer Engineering after having completed her undergraduate degree in Computer Engineering. She works as a graduate assistant and research assistant at the Signal Processing Research Lab in the Electrical Engineering Department. Additionally, she mentors and advises undergraduate engineering students participating in NSF's Project Achieve.

Her research involves the study of seismic earthquake signals and optic disc localization in retinal fundus images. She is on the team which will compete at the 30th Annual Intelligent Ground Vehicle Competition at Oakland University this June. Thania is responsible for the software development and communication with team members overseeing the project's hardware. She is a member of the Upsilon Pi Epsilon (UPE), International Honor Society for the Computing and Information Disciplines.

She served as a secretary of the UPE UB chapter in 2021 and 2022. She is also a member of the Society of Women Engineers and attended its annual conference in 2019. In addition to her academic studies, Thania works part-time in billing administration for a private medical business. She hopes to work as a hardware engineer since she has experience working with digital design simulation, FPGA, and embedded systems. She enjoys playing video games, conducting research, and watching movies with her family.



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### Joanna A. Badara, Ph.D.,

is the UB RISE 2023 Chair, an Associate Professor of Education, and Director of the Hybrid EdD program in Educational Leadership (with a specialization in International Education). Her research focuses on the professional development of teachers, STEM education, science teacher education, engineering education, and neuroscience applied to education.

Her work has been presented at national and international conferences and published in peer-reviewed journals. She has mentored numerous doctoral dissertation research projects conducted by students in the Education and Engineering departments. She has been the recipient of grants (as principal investigator) from UB, the Department of Education, and NSF.



## Adding Value to the Student Experience: UB Alumni Association Panel

When you graduate from UB, you become a member of the University of Bridgeport Alumni Association (UBAA) for life. Come meet and hear from UBAA board members and three distinguished alumni who will share their UB experiences and the different paths they have taken to establish themselves in their post-UB professions. The panel would like to engage the audience to learn how they can help support current Purple Knights in their career pursuits.





## Adding Value to the Student Experience: UB Alumni Association Panel



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### **Carmen A. Nieves ('11)**

was married, pregnant, and a drop-out at 17-years old before becoming a single parent at 19. She has proven that one's past does not dictate one's future and that anything is possible with support and hard work. Today, Carmen is the Chief Engagement Officer at CT Consulting Services, a workforce and business development organization whose mission is to use civic engagement as a vehicle for growth and social change through the arts. She holds an associate in arts and a bachelor's degree in Psychology from UB. The common threads in her nonprofit career are extensive board work, community organizing, and consistent leadership at the intersection of equity and opportunity.

Her civic efforts include volunteering with organizations like Alpha Community Service, Community Emergency Responder Team, the South End Neighborhood Revitalization Zone, Board Member of Bridgeport Neighborhood Trust, and 2016 Madrina for the Puerto Rican Parade of Fairfield County. She has assisted 500+ businesses with the development of civic ideas and projects that improve lives. She is currently a TV host for CT at Our Service, which airs live on public access station Soundview Community Media TV. Our Service highlights individuals who make the community a better place. She believes the FUTURE IS FEMALE and supports a yearly mentoring event with #100GirlsLeading, standing with her sisters to empower change in Bridgeport and beyond. She is also a Technical Assistant Coach and Consultant for YouthBuild USA.



## Adding Value to the Student Experience: UB Alumni Association Panel



### Jeff Tracey ('15)

has been a notable leader at Mutual Security Credit Union for over sixteen years and currently serves as the Vice President of Loan Operations. His primary function is to direct and oversee all aspects of the credit union's lending activity, ensuring operational efficiency, quality of member service, and compliance with existing regulations and policies. In addition, Jeff is responsible for managing credit portfolio risks, developing innovative consumer and mortgage loan solutions, and executing an efficient lending strategic plan that supports the credit union's mantra, "people helping people".

With a strategic focus to develop sustainable, needs-based financial solutions, Jeff has been able to put the Business Administration (BBA) and Human Resource Management (CCD) degrees he earned from UB to good use. His contributions at Mutual Security Credit Union have garnered him recognition for the development of programs that provide financial access and equity to historically marginalized communities.

While he spends most of his days managing the credit union's affairs, he also has a proven history of fostering community impact through his passion and commitment to civic responsibility. He has volunteered at the Valley United Way serving in different roles (i.e., Board of Directors, Governance Committee and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council). He is an Associate Pastor at the Apostolic Worship Center in Bridgeport, President of the NCACI International Youth Ministry, and recently joined the Economic Development Committee for the Greater Bridgeport NAACP chapter.





## Adding Value to the Student Experience: UB Alumni Association Panel



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### **Lesly J. Valbrun ('16, '22), DC, MBA,**

is an experienced and results-oriented healthcare leader, administrator, clinician, educator, strategic planner, and public speaker. Through his work, he emphasizes optimal health and wellness, personal growth principles, and leadership development. Dr. Valbrun currently serves as the President for the Greater Bridgeport NAACP, is an active member of the Big Brothers Big Sisters program, and is a C hairperson of the Ethics Committee for the City of Bridgeport.

Dr. Valbrun has earned a BS in Biology from Atlantic Union College, an MPH from Loma Linda University, a Doctor of Chiropractic from University of Bridgeport and is now earning his MBA at UB. Dr. Valbrun currently focuses on providing chiropractic services to underserved populations with the Community Health Center, Inc. of Middletown, CT. Aside from providing patients with chiropractic treatments and orthopedic and neurological exams, Dr. Valbrun trains fourth-year Chiropractic students and APRN/FND residents. Dr. Valbrun sits for his chiropractic specialty boards in Neuromusculoskeletal Medicine this year.



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### **William T. Moran, ('74)**

previously served as the Sr. Transformation Leader for IBM Global Procurement. Bill graduated from UB in 1974 with a BS in Business Management. Through his college years, he worked at Bridgeport Hospital in roles as varied as emergency aide, phlebotomist, and credit union manager. He began his professional career as an intern in materials management with Eaton Corporation in Cleveland, OH. Bill recently retired from IBM, where he served as an experience supply chain professional and business transformational leader.

He joined IBM in 1996 as a professional hire and held numerous roles across the Integrated Supply Chain and Procurement organizations with global experience in procurement, IT strategy, business process transformation and supply chain operations. He has had extensive global experiences across the automotive and trucking, material handling, industrial and consumer power tools and technology industries. Bill currently serves as the President of UB's Alumni Association Board of Directors. He is a member of UB's Industry Advisory Board, a frequent guest lecturer on Supply Chain and business topics, and speaks at classroom and Innovation Center "Lunch and Learn" events.



## Adding Value to the Student Experience: UB Alumni Association Panel



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### **Lorraine Taylor ('76)**

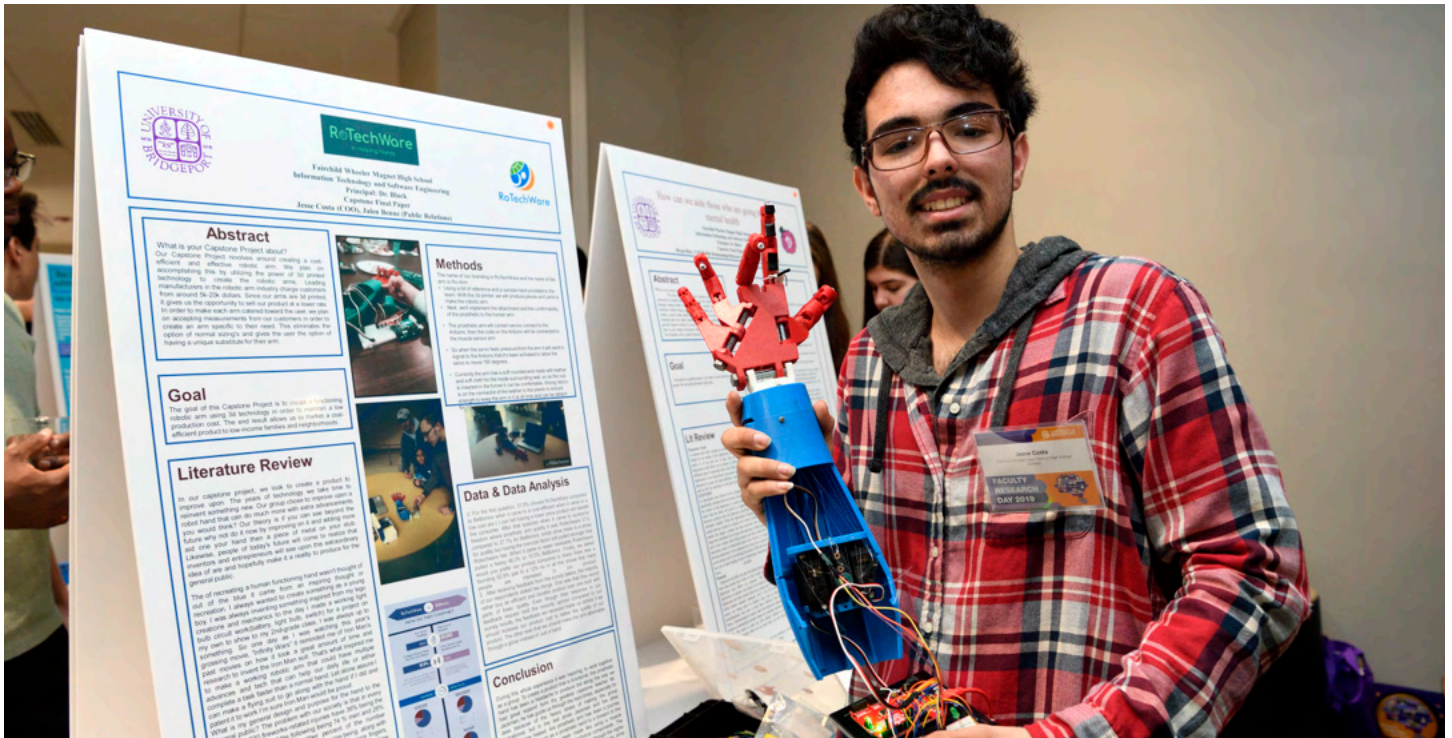
graduated cum laude with a BS in Fashion Merchandising. In 1981, she received a master's in Business Administration with a concentration in Marketing from the Kogod School of Business at the American University in Washington, DC. She channeled her business and marketing experience into product development and revenue generation for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (which covers Washington, DC, Maryland and northern Virginia).

After 32 years of service in fare payment development, project management, customer service, and creative product implementation, she is now retired. However, she remains active in the industry through contract work for major transit agencies across the nation. She serves as co-chair for UB's Black Alumni Association Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Endowed Scholarship with a focus on fundraising. She is also an active member on the UB Alumni Board. She enjoys traveling, working with senior citizens for an active lifestyle, and expanding her knowledge base with Spanish language skills.



# New Commercialization Resources for CT Innovators and Manufacturers

Whether you are an innovator, entrepreneur sourcing manufacturing capabilities, or an established manufacturer seeking suppliers and subs closer to home, new programs by ForgeCT and ConnSTEP are available to help you make vital connections.





## New Commercialization Resources for CT Innovators and Manufacturers



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### **Bernice Zampano**

is Program Manager of CONNEX CT, ConnStep's new Supply Chain database. Her background includes program responsibilities for the Manufacturing Innovation Fund Incumbent Worker Training program and Equal Opportunity efforts.



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### **Jack Crane**

is a Strategic Advisor of ConnSTEP. He provides manufacturers with guidance in strategic planning, marketing, product development, lean activities, and fabrication. Additionally, Jack helps to match inventors and start-ups seeking manufacturing assistance. He has authored or co-authored more than 50 papers on new products and materials, and holds more than 30 patents. Jack is a Fellow of the American Society of Materials, the first recipient of the NIST/MEP Achievement Award, and recipient of the Leadership Award for the Manufacturing Hall of Fame.

CONNSTEP focuses on identifying opportunities for growth, improving productivity, and ensuring its clients remain competitive in evolving markets. Their subject matter experts implement advanced business and technical solutions, as well as workforce strategies to help small and medium-sized businesses reach their goals. Learn more at [connstep.org](http://connstep.org).



## New Commercialization Resources for CT Innovators and Manufacturers



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### Adam Rodrigues

is Vice President of FORGE CT. He has a background as a supply chain and operations professional and has worked in manufacturing for over 10 years. Starting on the shop floor as a machine operator, he worked his way up to an operations manager in the Supply Chain division of Lenox. Previously, he managed a grant to connect Western Massachusetts Manufacturers with hardware startups.

FORGE CT is a nonprofit 501 (c)3 organization that connects startups with compatible, forward-thinking manufacturers, design firms, and engineers. Their mission is to help innovators navigate the journey from physical prototype to commercialization and impact at scale. Learn more at [forgeimpact.org](http://forgeimpact.org).



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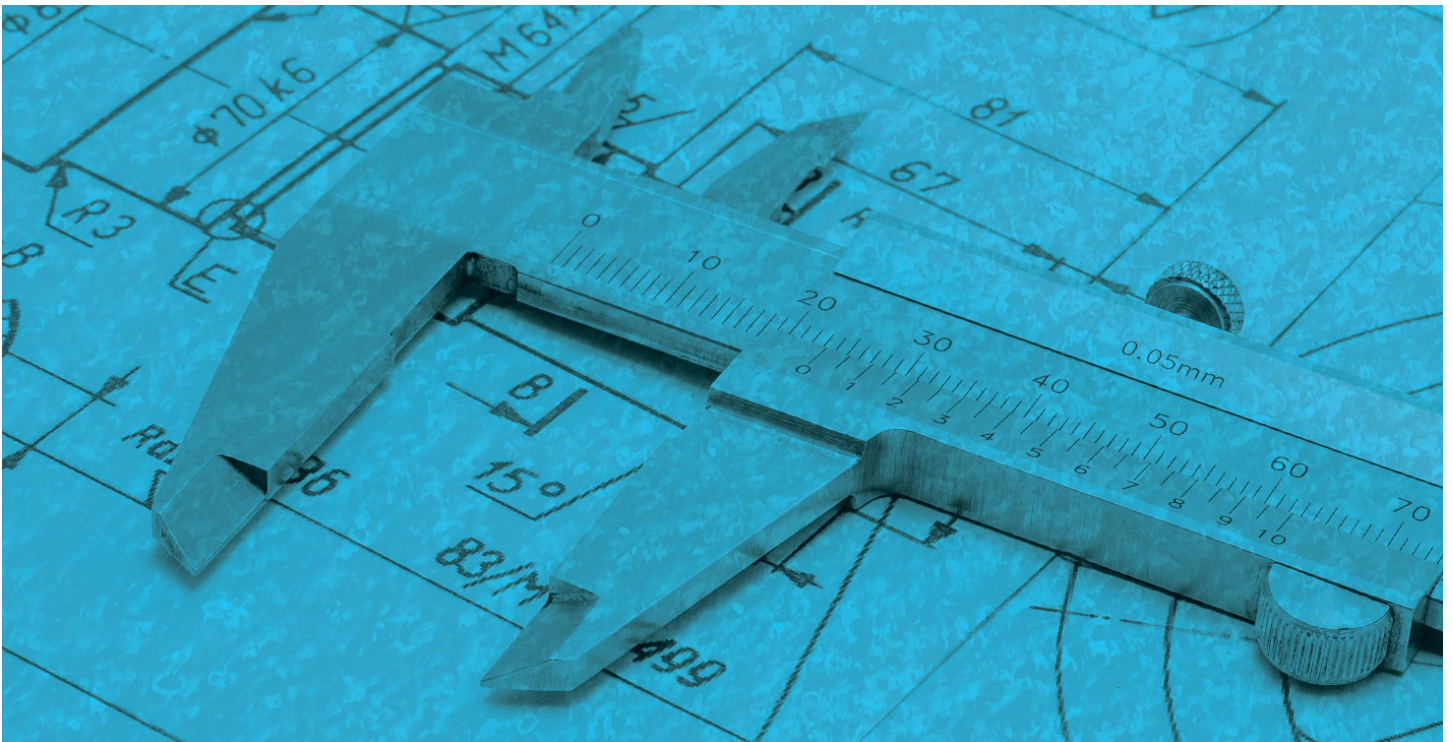
### Mike Roer ('08),

is a serial entrepreneur and President of the Entrepreneurship Foundation, an organization which supports entrepreneurs through educational programs, business plan competitions, and connections to talent and capital. He is an advisor to business incubators and a frequent lecturer at universities on business modeling and financing. He is also the author of *The Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management*.



## UB's Bauer Innovation Center Launches Entrepreneurs

UB's Innovation Center at Bauer Hall offers programming to students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the Bridgeport community. Learn what the Innovation Center has to offer to entrepreneurs through the Student Entrepreneur Center and Accelerator Programs. Hear from a current student, alumnae, staff, and Accelerator mentor about their experiences at the Innovation Center. Each entrepreneur has a unique journey and the Innovation Center has the programming, support and resources to guide them. We will also announce the winner of the *Student Entrepreneur Center Showcase* held during the lunch hour!





## UB's Bauer Innovation Center Launches Entrepreneurs



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### JP Badara ('26)

is majoring in Mechanical Engineering, but also has interests in business and finance. He is currently serving as the Vice President of UB's Student Entrepreneurship Club. Prior to attending UB, he obtained a Commercial Drone License (FAA Part 107 License) and ran his own construction company during the summer after his high school graduation. He has worked as a product design engineering intern at a manufacturing plant in Bridgeport and as a jeweler and watch technician apprentice in Fairfield. His hobbies include working on cool cars and learning more about the world around him.



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### Thea Marx ('22)

received her doctorate of Naturopathic Medicine from UB, where she graduated Magna Cum Laude and was the recipient of the faculty award for excellence in Naturopathic Philosophy. She is a naturopathic physician and nutrigenomic expert who developed a product addressing surgical complications, especially surgical site infections which increase the risk of dying by 42%. Her product counters life-threatening complications and improves outcomes, reducing hospital readmissions and surgical mortality. She was raised on a cattle ranch near the Wind River Indian Reservation of Wyoming. She currently practices in Fairfield and Midtown Manhattan.



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### Kimberly Rose ('22)

received her Bachelor's in Business Administration with a concentration in Management. Simultaneously, she earned a certification as a Project Manager and pitched her business Caven Denise Rose – a Fairfield County-based nanny/manny agency. The business provides matches for career professionals and families so that a nanny/manny can find long-term placements of quality employment with families of children on the spectrum. The website will officially launch this summer. In the meantime, they are vetting service providers' credentials, training, certifications, licenses, or a conferred.



## UB's Bauer Innovation Center Launches Entrepreneurs



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### **Sherri Dente, Esq.**

received her BS in Industrial and Management Engineering from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) and her JD with a concentration in Intellectual Property from Quinnipiac University School of Law. She is a patent attorney with over 13 years of experience at Wiggin & Dana LLP, General Electric, and RPI.



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### **Barbara Distasio**

is a senior innovation and business development executive with over 20 years of experience in a variety of industries. She is an innovation leader, strategic visionary, and successful team leader. With her excellent problem-solving and implementation skills, she has been a reliable facilitator across organizations, especially at the "C" level, relying on solid communication and presentation experience to get consensus and results.

A quick study with an affinity for complex issues, change, and innovation in dynamic work environments, she can initiate and oversee innovative brainstorming, idea prioritization, and management on a large scale. She provides creative problem-solving workshops, advises and directs ideators in the development of compelling new product and business concepts, and acts as a knowledge broker to ensure that the most innovative concepts and practices are shared and adopted by independent operating groups.





## UB's Synergy/Cross Culture with Industry, Business, & Higher Education Partnerships

Goodwin University's Advanced Manufacturing program is expanding! Learn about the program's origin story and the successes they have had in teaching the next generation of manufacturers with the Advanced Manufacturing Mobile Training Lab. Our panel will relate Goodwin University's vision for extending their manufacturing program to the UB campus, thanks to a generous donation from philanthropists George and Carol Bauer. This Manufacturing Center will host majors from Goodwin's Manufacturing, Machining, and Logistics program and is scheduled for opening in the near future.





## UB's Synergy/Cross Culture with Industry, Business, & Higher Education Partnerships



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### Clifford E. Thermer, Ed.D.,

is a 24-year veteran who served municipal and state police forces in a variety of patrol and administrative functions. He retired from state service at the rank of Lieutenant from the Office of Administrative Services as the Commandant of the State Police Academy and Educational Coordinator for the Department of Public Safety. His career includes 15 years developing training programs at the recruit, incumbent, supervisory, and management levels; implementing traditional and distance learning initiatives for personnel; overseeing staff development; acting as liaison with colleges and universities; and providing educational advising to personnel.

In 2010, Cliff joined Goodwin University as an associate professor and Director of the Organizational Studies program and the Business Administration program. His appointments include Chair of the Department of Social Science, Business and Education (2011), Assistant Vice President of Strategy and Business Development (2013), and Dean of the School of Business, Technology, and Advanced Manufacturing (2020). Dr. Thermer received a doctorate in Educational Leadership from the University of Hartford.



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### Melanie Hoben, MS,

is the Director of Workforce Development at Goodwin University. She began working at the Governor's Office in 1994 and worked for the state government for 21 years. She has held leadership roles at Connecticut Developmental Authority and was instrumental in effectuating passage of legislation regarding the Tax Incremental Finance program. In 2017, she joined Goodwin to utilize her statewide networks and help train the manufacturing workforce. Her job is to liaise with University Relations, the Grants Management team, external business and community partners on workforce development. In addition, she serves the project manager of a \$2MM U.S. Department of Labor grant, which provides funding for manufacturers to upskill their incumbent workforce.

She serves on the ManufactureCT Workforce Committee, represents Goodwin University at Connecticut Manufacturers Collaborative and OWS, is with the Governor's Workforce Council, and is a member of the Women in Manufacturing (WiM) Connecticut Chapter. WiM provides excellent opportunities for women to expand their local network, build valuable business relationships, and enjoy industry-related programming. Ms. Hoben received a MS in Organizational Leadership from Goodwin University in 2021.