

UB Knightlines

Saving History

As ISIS destroys priceless cultural artifacts, one UB student has been protecting UNESCO's most valuable archaeological site in Jordan. A story of hope.



UNIVERSITY OF
BRIDGEPORT

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ALSO INSIDE • Summer Break • Work That Travels • Tough Mudder

President's Line



Neil Albert Salonen

By the time you read this, students will have returned to campus and classes will be in full swing for the fall semester of the 2015-16 Academic Year. I always look forward to this exciting time. My wife, Rebecca, and I have the pleasure of personally greeting our freshman class and their families at Convocation and the barbecue on the Waldemere lawn that follows. This year, with an incoming class of almost 1,600 new students, our total enrollment stands at over 5,400. Our students have chosen to study at UB for a many reasons: to pursue degrees in health sciences or business, to acquire skills in engineering, or simply to study at a school where they will be recognized and welcomed by their professors. If they are unsure about what lies ahead, they will find that the University of Bridgeport is eager to help them identify their talents and interests. Students' personal goals may differ, but their ambition will unite them, just as drive and determination have united our alumni for generations.

We launch the year with a sense of momentum, having completed much-anticipated projects and building upon recent accomplishments. Returning students, alumni, and our distinguished faculty will notice the physical differences on campus. We had considered the renovation of Schine Hall to accommodate our growing enrollment, but the building had been constructed before current building codes applied and could not be renovated cost-effectively. Therefore, this summer construction crews worked non-stop to demolish it. Bringing down the 127,000-square-foot building was a monumental undertaking. Simultaneously, just across the street, crews began building our newest residence hall. I can think of no more appropriate image than the juxtaposition of these two buildings, the new replacing the old, to represent the evolution of UB.

We continue to advance, adapt, and serve our students and community alike. Indeed, the restoration of Cortright Hall, home to the Office of Alumni Relations, symbolizes our commitment to preserving and honoring UB's distinguished past. Funded with state historic preservation grants, the project restores the exterior of a building that is part of the city's rich social and architectural history. We are proud to be its steward and a partner in the community.

There are many academic changes, too. This fall, UB launched its new RN to BSN (Bachelor of Science in Nursing) Program. The four-year track will ensure that Registered Nurses can advance their education to be more competitive in the field of health care. The nursing program is now housed in a training center, completed this summer, which boasts medical simulation labs and other state-of-the-art resources. In recent years, the University has steadily enhanced its health sciences programs, with the Physician Assistant Institute, the Medical Laboratory Science program, and a new Center for Naturopathic Medicine, among others. We are proud of our track record and our commitment to training experts who can work in all areas of the health care profession.

These are only a few of the exciting changes at UB, which even include new menus and food offerings in Marina Dining Hall, as you'll read in these pages.

As I write, I am looking forward to another event: Welcome Back Weekend, held to celebrate and honor our alumni. UB evolves and changes, but its people will always be its most important assets. The doors remain open to all our buildings—new, restored, or old favorites. I invite you back to see the changes, honor the past, and take pride in your Alma Mater.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Neil Albert Salonen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Neil Albert Salonen
President

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Editor's Note

The number of students earning college degrees overseas has been described as a mass movement. With good reason: approximately 4.5 million individuals currently study outside of their home countries, more than double the 2.1 million who did so in 2000. That number is expected to grow as colleges and universities launch the kind of study-abroad programs that UB has offered for years as a leader in global education.

In fact, you don't have to leave campus to be immersed in a wholly different world at UB. With students from more than 80 countries, international opportunities abound. When students sit down for lunch at Marina Dining Hall, conduct research in one of our labs, compete as Purple Knights on sports teams, or participate in any number of academic and extracurricular activities, they join peers from around the world. Unlike other schools, global education at the University isn't a separate program housed in an otherwise homogenous community; it's a vibrant, exciting part of the everyday experience. By the time they graduate, UB students will have been immersed in a culturally dynamic world that truly prepares them to live and work as global citizens. Such experiences are invaluable. Just ask UB Trustee Tom O'Hara, a member of the Class of 1983 who's built a successful specialty food company that sources products from around the globe. (See "Focus On" on page 36.)

Thanks to its cultural diversity, UB offers international programs off campus that are truly unique as well. As you'll read in this issue, it is one of just a dozen universities that has been granted NGO status by the United Nations. This special distinction enables students from our College of Public and International Affairs (CPIA) to intern and work at the UN's headquarters in Manhattan. One of them, Janaina Bordignon, spent the summer working on a major project that will help UN police officers investigate gender-based violence. (For more on Bordignon's project, see "Work That Travels" on page 26.) Partnerships with universities around the world allow UB faculty from various departments to teach overseas, a life-changing experience that ultimately enhances their own work, as College of Chiropractic Professor Stephen Perle attests in this month's "Closing Thought" essay on page 48.

Meanwhile, students are encouraged to take immersive language courses that are enhanced by one-of-a-kind internships that should give great hope to anyone who's worried about the future. As I write this, news from the Middle East has been devastating. Yet as you'll read in this issue, I've also just returned from Jordan, where six UB students spent their summer working at leading nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to address critical issues, like how to best serve thousands of Syrian refugees or preserve priceless monuments at Petra, a World Heritage Site. It was my great fortune that I could document our students' work with Dubai-based photographer Pia Torelli, whose breathtaking images you'll find in these pages. On that note, I'd like to share some photos from behind the stories in this issue. I don't normally run images of our reporting, but this trip underscores how unique and invaluable UB's global learning programs are to us all.

Leslie Geary
Founding Editor, *Knightlines*



Pipelines

High Marks

To the Editor,

I always look forward to the graduation issue of *Knightlines*. The Summer 2015 issue is such a celebration of student success, acknowledging effort as well as achievement. This year's reading pleasure is enhanced by the great articles about the many interesting and diverse directions graduates are taking as they move into the world of work. It is refreshing to read about young people who are able to follow their dreams so soon after the hard work of finishing their studies.

All this proves that the University of Bridgeport is a dynamic community of learners and doers.

Congratulations to all!

David Chura '87

Leeds, MA

Deserved Recognition

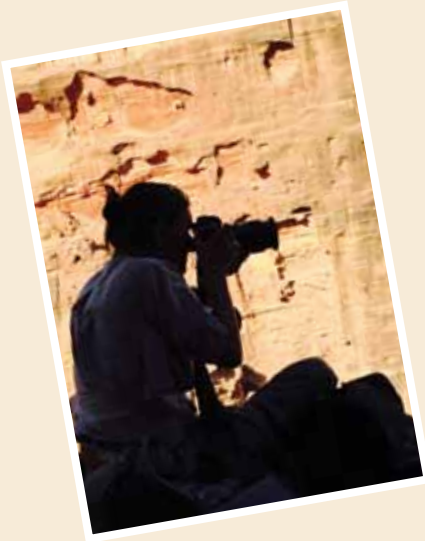
Dear Editor,

I am happy to see that Dr. John Nicholas ("Doc Rock") is being recognized by UB at this year's Athletic Hall of Fame Dinner. I played basketball from 1988–1992, and he was like the sixth man or extra assistant coach. I could always count on seeing him behind our bench during games at the Hubbell.

His class was very enjoyable. He was a kind and supportive professor. Being raised in a concrete jungle like New York City, I never thought I would enjoy recognizing different kinds of rocks in our environment. He was simply the best, and I know the rest of my teammates would state the same.

Stephen Wills-Johnston '92

Laurelton, NY



What do you think?!


Knightlines would love to hear from you!

Please send Letters to the Editor to knightlines@bridgeport.edu or at 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.





As ISIS destroys priceless cultural artifacts, one UB student spent the summer helping to protect UNESCO's most valuable archaeological site in Jordan. A story of hope.

Saving

By Leslie Geary

It was silent, except for the doves. Their coos reverberated through the towering walls of the Siq, welcoming Douglas Boucher as he walked with some haste down its winding passage, nearly a mile long, toward a 2,000-year-old edifice that's become one of Jordan's most well-known archaeological landmarks: the Treasury at Petra. The sun would rise within the hour, illuminating the site's sandstone cliffs until they blazed fiery red. For two months, Boucher, an archaeologist and graduate student at University of Bridgeport's College of Public and International Affairs (CPIA), had immersed himself in the culture and history of the place while interning at Petra National Trust (PNT)—the premier organization in charge of safeguarding one of UNESCO's most revered World Heritage Sites. Since his arrival in Jordan, the whole notion of protecting this strange and wonderful landmark had taken on a new meaning for Boucher: across the border in Syria, similarly priceless UNESCO landmarks were being blown up by ISIS.

Six of Boucher's peers from the CPIA were in Jordan, too, completing internships at other organizations devoted to equally important causes like human trafficking and the ballooning refugee crisis in Syria. Like Boucher's work at PNT, the summer internships presented the UB students with invaluable and wholly unique opportunities to learn more about international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), diplomacy, and issues that currently dominate nightly newscasts and the front pages of newspapers around the globe. Since language is a key component to all of their work, Boucher and his peers also met five mornings a week at Princess Sumaya Technical University in Amman, where, thanks to an agreement with UB, they took Arabic lessons before heading off to work.

(continued on page 6)

History

Student Douglas Boucher and a young Bedouin discover Petra's treasures together.





The Siq's winding passage at Petra

iPhones may be found in Petra, but the Bedouin way of life remains largely unchanged.



Douglas Boucher, before sunrise at Petra

But today was a holiday: there was no school and no work. Boucher wanted to see the Treasury before the tourists arrived.

Moving briskly, he continued through the Siq's passage before stepping, at last, into the Treasury's dusty, open courtyard. Boucher looked about. In its heyday, Petra had been at the center of teeming spice routes—an ancient Grand Central Station, of sorts—that extended from Greece and the Mediterranean, across North Africa, Egypt, Arabia, to India and beyond.

Eventually, trade of incense, silver, gold, silk, precious stones, and other goods dried to a trickle. Petra's network of roads, agricultural steppes, and water-harvesting systems would be all but forgotten, lost to the West, until the early 1880s, when a Swiss explorer named Johann Ludwig Burckhardt stumbled upon its protean landscape of obelisks, tombs, and caves.

But the Bedouin never left. Semi-nomadic and highly adaptable, these days they cheerfully comingle with tourists, whose dollars and dinars help to fuel a lively, insouciant marketplace. ("No money, no honey," one boy selling trinkets tells Boucher.) Even though it's well before 6 a.m., some of the Bedu are here now, ready for Boucher with a sleepy white donkey named Flower—vital transportation if he's going to make it past the Royal Tombs and up, up, up to the top of Jabal

al-Khutbha, Petra's easternmost cliff where he'll have a bird's-eye view of the Treasury at sunrise.

Boucher eyes Flower, then gamely hops on. With a "Hut! Hut! Hut!" from his guide, donkey and graduate student are off. No GPS needed, Flower trots along the serpentine trail for the better part of an hour before stopping to safely deposit Boucher at a Bedouin tent perched at a dizzying height hundreds of feet above the Treasury. The monument's still bathed in shadows; there's time for tea with his guides before the sun blasts over the mountain.

"This is amazing!" Boucher beams, settling down on woven blankets. "I've wanted to come here ever since I saw *Indiana Jones* as a kid."

Childhood dreams

The Spielberg classic also inspired Boucher to become an archaeologist. At seven, he tromped through Connecticut woodlands, looking for flint arrowheads and caves facing east—potential spots for former Native American dwelling places. Now he's devoting his life to protecting such places. Boucher earned his undergraduate degree in archaeology at Central Connecticut State University, specializing in the preservation of artifacts, or what's known as "cultural resource management" (CRM).



Around the bend: the Treasury at the end of the Siq



(Left) Petra National Trust Director Aysar Akrawi and Boucher

(Below) Boucher's work brought him to schools in Jordan to teach students about Petra.



At UB, he's earning a master's degree in global development and peace because, he explains, "humans cannot move forward, they cannot develop without preserving the past. Unfortunately, a lot of people cannot make the connection between archaeology and global development."

Fittingly, when not studying for his master's, Boucher works part-time, conducting CRM field studies throughout New England and the Bronx, making sure it's safe for developers to build.

"You don't want bulldozers tearing up artifacts and burial grounds," he says. His goal: to continue CRM fieldwork around the world ("I'll go anywhere!" he promises) while teaching archaeology at a university one day.

"An unprecedented threat"

Dr. Aysar Akrawi, executive director of Petra National Trust and Boucher's boss this summer, understands how a kid like Boucher falls in love with bits of pottery, arrowheads, abandoned caves. Growing up in Iraq, she lost her heart to archaeology early, too.

"Like Jordan, Iraq is a wall-to-wall archaeology site. When I was a little girl we would picnic at these sites," she says. "I can't tell you how many necklaces you could make out of picnic beads—lapis, emerald, agate—and the Islamic pots we found intact! I lived with this. And

my mother, for whatever reason, she was born in 1911, she had a limited education, but she was interested in archaeology. She worked at the Iraq Museum. So this whole business of culture and archaeology was a big part of my background."

But such childhood experiences are rare, and that puts sites like Petra at risk. If individuals don't feel a personal connection with the past, they won't bother to preserve it for the future, says Akrawi. Petra may be one of UNESCO's most recognizable World Heritage Sites. The image of its Treasury may grace the cover of innumerable guidebooks, postcards, ashtrays, and other *tchotchkes*. "But in reality," Akrawi says bluntly, "the local communities do not identify with the site. As far as they are concerned, they are ruins. Foreigners are the ones coming in and making a lot of money."

It's not just indifference: Akrawi blames ignorance for the recent deliberate destruction of World Heritage Sites in Palmyra, Aleppo, Bosra, and other locations by ISIS. She's not alone. When UNESCO's World Heritage Committee met for its annual meeting in Bonn, Germany, this July, the urgency to protect immovable relics was palpable. In a formal statement, members warned:

Most years, the annual meeting of UNESCO's World Heritage Committee is a time to celebrate the best of humanity and nature, as world leaders gather to designate new sites based on outstanding cultural and natural attributes that are of value to the whole world. But this week in Bonn, the meeting started on a somber note as speakers warned of the unprecedented threat of violent extremism and cultural cleansing that has specifically targeted world heritage sites in the Middle East.

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“With children, if you start teaching them as early as seven, in fun, interactive programs, you will have a whole generation that speaks the language of preservation.”

—Dr. Aysar Akrawi

The best counter-attack? Education. As UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova told colleagues: “Our response to ignorance and criminal stupidity must also have a cultural dimension . . . that is like a bridge from ancient times to the present.”

While Petra isn't Palmyra, Akrawi and Boucher argue that it faces plenty of manmade and natural risks of its own, from littering to looting, vandalism, and erosion that can and must be combatted with knowledge.

So PNT's targeting kids. “With children,” says Akrawi, “if you start teaching them as early as seven, in fun, interactive programs, you will have a whole generation that speaks the language of preservation and ownership and identity of the site.”

History Lessons

That's where Boucher comes in.

For the past two months, he's been responsible for creating lesson plans for PNT's Junior Ranger Program. Modeled after the National Park Service's similarly named campaign in the U.S., the program uses Jordan's material and intangible artifacts (“pottery and poems,” Boucher quips) in fun, interactive lessons that help kids relate to what they're seeing—and most critically—to get them excited by the past.

That's no small task (just ask anyone who's dragged a child through a museum without the benefit of an entertaining guide, gallery app, or other prop). But when kids get it, when something clicks, it's like nothing else. Suddenly, they really, truly understand why leaving an empty Pepsi can in the Siq or perching on top of vulnerable sandstone tombs or selling artifacts is a bad idea.

“We had one child approach a police officer who had finished smoking a cigarette and toss it on the ground. ‘Sir, that is not permitted,’” Akrawi marvels. “The guy was baffled! But he picked up his cigarette and threw it away. Normally, this would be interpreted as an insult. What is this pipsqueak telling me?! But not this time. The training with the children does have an impact.”

With luck, some of the Junior Rangers may go on to acquire cultural resource-management skills and become stewards at Petra or any number of Jordan's roughly 1,500 archaeological sites. They may, like Boucher, even dream of becoming Indiana Jones.

“You happen to have in Petra one of the oldest human settlements in the world!” says Boucher. “Look at their houses. Yours may be rectangular; theirs may be caves, but they're both houses. They wore leather. We

wear something else, but we are both dressed. We still eat the same type of bread! We teach the children to see the relationship between the past and themselves.”

Interrupts Akrawi: “We teach them that life didn't start the day they were born.”

Chasing light

Akrawi had been right: at Petra, the colors always change. Now hours past sunrise, the Treasury is more creamy yellow than pink. It's also blisteringly hot—too hot for the doves, at least. They've returned to nest silently in Petra's innumerable caves. Tourists are a more determined lot, however, and in the courtyard in front of the Treasury, the Bedu are conducting a brisk business in bottled-water sales and camel rides. “The best coffee in the Middle East!” reads one hand-painted sign hanging from an improbable café stand.

Flower is not a round-trip donkey, so Boucher picks his way back down Jabal al-Khubtha on foot, back through the Siq, past thirsty tourists, toward Petra village, where he'll hire a cab to take him seven kilometers down Route 35 to the neighboring village of Al Rajef.

His colleague, Huda Amarin, is already there. Amarin's originally from Wadi Musa, the next town over from Petra. Now she helps to run PNT's education programs. Today she's launching a five-day Junior Ranger Workshop at a local school. The three lessons Boucher's created this summer will be integrated into the curriculum in coming months, and he wants a better sense of what the youth program is about. Amarin's agreed to show him.

Each year, she says, the Junior Ranger Program trains some 680 kids, ages seven to 15, about the significance of the landmark in their own backyard. The program is targeted to students and their teachers from the six villages surrounding Petra, and Akrawi insists on including as many children as possible: boys, girls, children with disabilities, the Bedouin, farmers' kids—in short, children from disparate and often disconnected communities who are united by Petra. In this way, learning about Petra isn't just about archaeology. It's about creating social awareness, creating the crucial “cultural dimension” that UNESCO chief Irina Bokova spoke so passionately about in Bonn.

Heady stuff, but how does it actually work when dealing with a roomful of teenagers?

Boucher's decided stick with the basics: His first curriculum, “Safeguarding Intangible Heritage,” begins

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with simple introductions since “names are an aspect of intangible cultural heritage that we all share,” he says.

As his cab pulls away from Petra’s visitor center to take him to Al Rajef, Boucher begins to explain: “In a Jordanian context, the name King Abdullah At’thani Ibn Al Hussein conveys to us not only the King’s history but also the history of the Middle East. At’thani, which means ‘the second,’ reminds us of King Abdullah I, the founder of contemporary Jordan; and ‘Ibn Al-Hussein’ or ‘son of Hussein’ reminds us of King Abdullah II’s father, King Hussein.”

Taxi and Boucher accelerate.

“Continuing to investigate the royal family brings us to the family name ‘Hashemite.’ Oral history tells us this name can be traced back to the Quaraish tribe, which prompts us to think about the coming of Islam. By exploring the name, we can use intangible cultural heritage as a time machine!”

The cab comes to a halt. Boucher stops to take a breath. Then, like a kid making the most important wish in the world, he adds without a trace of irony: “If I can share my love of archaeology with them, then Petra will be taken care of quite well!”

Akrawi, typically cool and difficult to impress, has not discouraged him. “It’s *very* important Douglas gets to see the role of the community with the archaeology he’s involved in,” she insists. “How can you engage the population in a viable way?”

Boucher’s about to find out. Exiting the taxi, he makes his way to Al Rajef Girls School, a whitewashed one-story building decorated with students’ drawings and occasional red, black, and green crepe-paper streamers. Classroom doors are flung wide open to encourage cross breezes, an optimistic gesture on this scorched day without a trace of wind.

Theory into practice

Amarin greets Boucher, dusty and smelling faintly of donkey, with a bemused “You made it!” before guiding him to a classroom. Eighteen girls, between 13 and 15, are talking with teacher Esra’a Sager about how young people interact with Petra when they visit. Some have visited the site. Others have not.

“We should organize camp programs so children can come in to help clean,” says Hala Mansure, 16.

“We can also show people not to play on the monuments so they know,” adds Rahma Oasam, 16. “It’s our responsibility as the young people of Jordan! It’s our heritage! Our nationality!”



Teacher Esra’a Sager and Boucher teamed up to talk about Petra at Al Rajef Girls School.

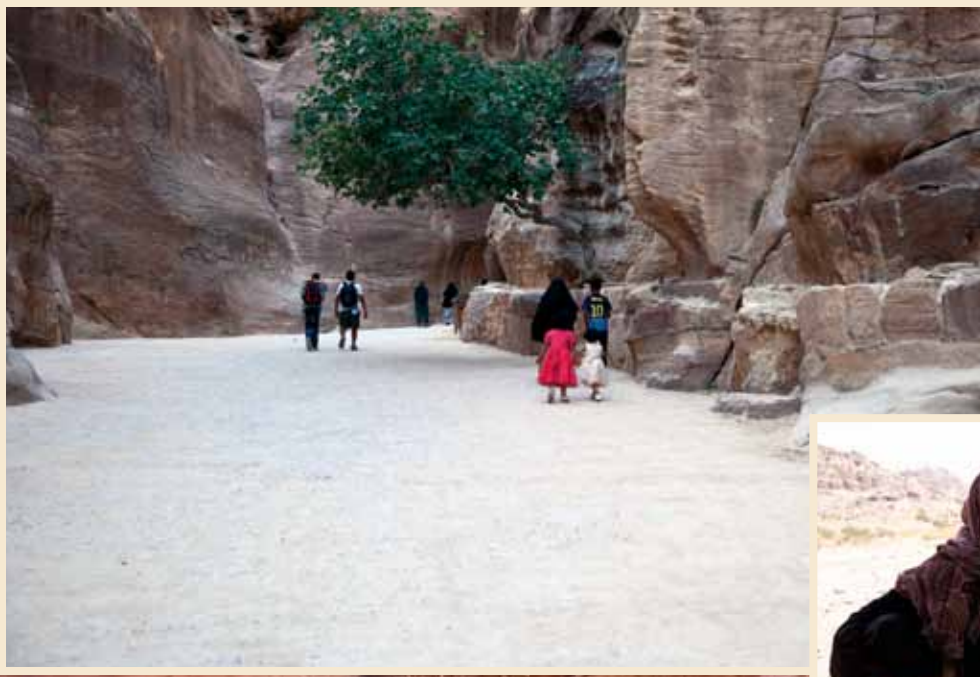


Boucher waits to be introduced, then makes his pitch. “There are many, many things you can do at Petra. You can be an archaeologist. You could work in tourism and show people from around the world this beautiful place. You can do research about your ancestors, your culture. You can become a historian. You can teach! You can become an architectural preservationist. Petra offers so much if you take care of it. But if it’s destroyed, it’s gone forever,” he says.

He continues for a few minutes, speaking Arabic that sometimes may be more enthusiastic than accurate. But as he leans into the room, gestures, smiles, Boucher slowly reels them in. The girls introduce themselves, raise their hands to offer an opinion. Boucher’s clearly thrilled to be here, speaking Arabic, learning from the locals—about language, about culture, about life in and around Petra.

“They know the area. They’ll tell a side of the story that Western archaeologists would never think of,” he says. “In this way, the archaeology stays relevant. We see mute objects, but when they’re involved, it gives those mute objects a voice.” ■





Boucher accepts hospitality, and shelter from the sun, near the Treasury.

“Petra offers so much if you take care of it. But if it’s destroyed, it’s gone forever.”

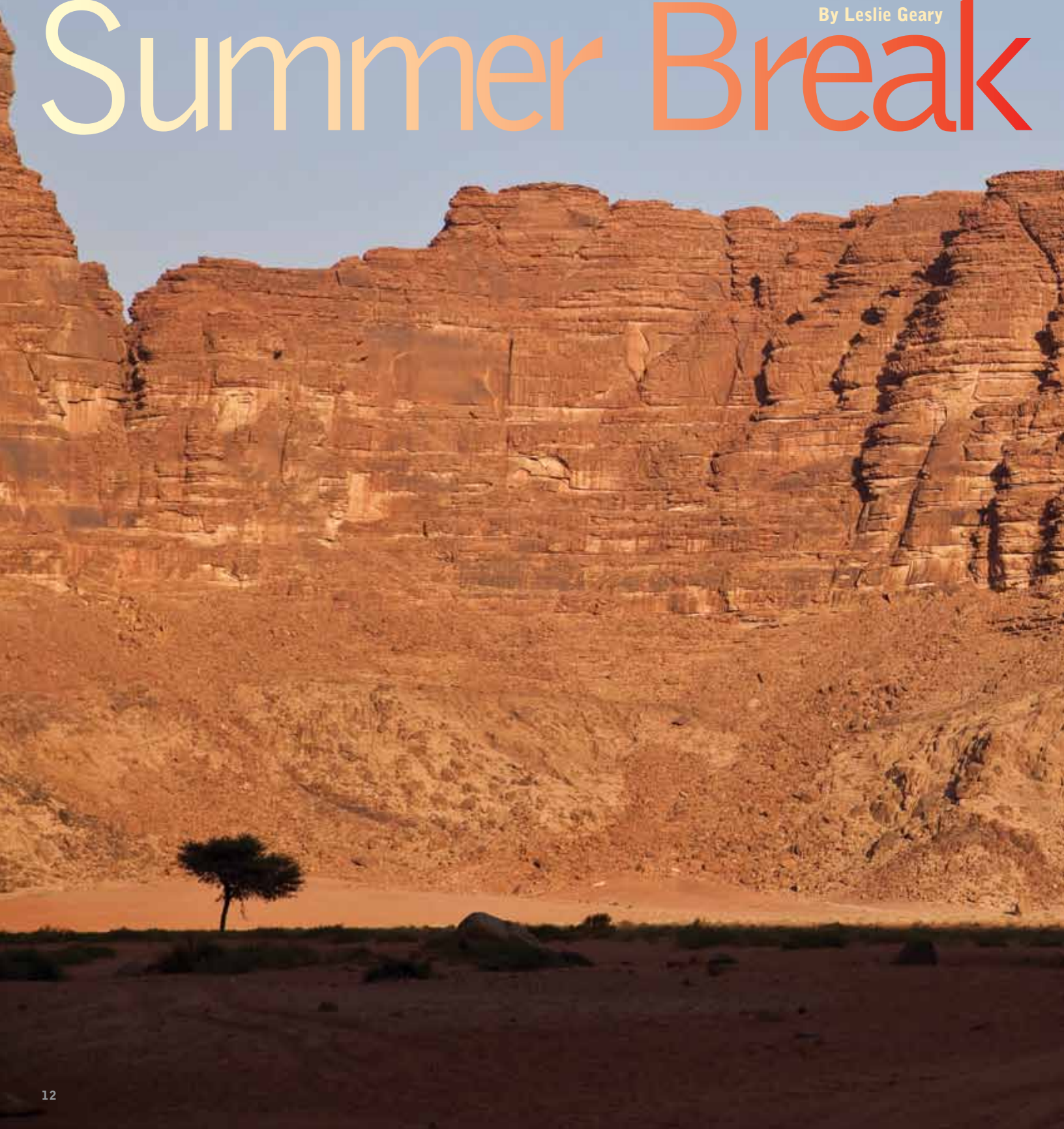
—Douglas Boucher



Radically different internships, plus intensive language training, immerse students from UB's College of Public and International Affairs in the world of global politics, human rights, and development in the Middle East.

Summer Break

By Leslie Geary



By 11:03 a.m. the classroom at Princess Sumaya Technical University in Amman, Jordan, was empty. For the past three hours though, it had resonated with boisterous laughter as six University of Bridgeport students boldly tried to converse in newly acquired Arabic. As they learned the names for rooms in a house, they seemed giddy with their newfound vocabulary.

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“What’s ‘kitchen’? That’s the most important room in the house!” Charles Quoffie piped up.

“خب بظم,” replied professor Tasnim Shaikh, writing the word in Arabic on a large pad for all to see. Now the students had scattered. They were headed to various offices throughout Jordan’s bustling capital, where for the past two months they’d been working at internships that had been carefully arranged for them by Robert Riggs, an expert on the Middle East and a professor back at UB’s College of Public and International Affairs (CPIA).

Riggs knew the students well: they were all earning degrees at CPIA in majors that would groom them for international careers, like global development, diplomacy, human rights and security. Being culturally literate was not just a calling for the students: it was a requirement to graduate from CPIA, one of just a dozen schools in the United States to be awarded NGO (nongovernmental organization) status by the United Nations. As an NGO, CPIA plays an active role in working with the UN in promoting peace, democracy, development, and human rights. In addition to language requirements (students must be bilingual, though many speak three or four languages), all CPIA majors have to complete internships related to their fields of study.

Hence the hasty retreat out of the classroom. Thanks to an agreement with UB, students have been able to study Arabic at Princess Sumaya Technical University since 2010. But four years ago, Riggs began reaching out to contacts at some of Jordan’s most prestigious think tanks, non-profits and other NGOs to add international internship opportunities as well.

As it turns out, the internships—immersive, demanding, and wholly unique—are not all that



Above: UB student Megan Alexander Perry in Amman
Right: Emily Riehl, Khaled Awamleh, founder of Visions Center for Strategic and Development Studies, and Brittany Livingston, where the two UB students worked on issues affecting Syrian refugees





unusual for UB students. But they've caught the eye of others. (Two students from Hunter College in New York City who had learned about the unique opportunities Riggs had coordinated, sought and got permission to join the UB group in Jordan over the summer.)

For the past decade, UB students have traveled to approximately 51 countries around the world to participate in a variety of internships and other global programs. Some have worked on cooperative coffee farms, others have perfected their Mandarin in China, interned with master glassblowers and designers in Murano, Italy, or participated in any number of opportunities tailored to their majors at UB.

"We try not to use a cookie-cutter method for advising students into a few specific international programs," explains Brandon LaFavor, director of the Education Abroad Resource Center at UB. "Instead, we provide support for students and work with them to design unique international experiences that are tailored to their individual goals."

Internships that make a difference

For Emily Riehl and Brittany Livingston, that meant interning together at Visions Center for Strategic and Development Studies, a human-rights NGO that's headquartered in Amman and has branches throughout the Middle East. When back in Connecticut, Riehl, a global development and peace major and daughter of a Bridgeport police officer, works with clients who've escaped slave labor from homes in high-income and shockingly unlikely communities like Easton and Greenwich. "Trafficking," she says, "has become a worldwide industry." Livingston, a criminology major from New

Jersey, plans to work in parole and prisoner counseling.

Their task this summer: to assess and report on mental-health issues faced by Syrian refugees now living in refugee camps in Jordan. It's a monumental task: by the end of the summer, more than 630,000 refugees had crossed the border into the country, according to the United Nations Refugee Agency. Of that, women and children make up 80 percent of the camp population, the UN has found.

In an extensive and alarming 20-page report they compiled for Visions Center for Strategic and Development Studies, Riehl and Livingston detailed a harrowing existence within refugee camps. On the rise: human and sex trafficking, child labor, rape, pregnancies among unmarried women and young girls, gender-based violence, and other crimes that leave physical and massive psychological scarring.

"Women and children become extremely vulnerable to exploitation and violence when living in the camps," they reported. Their paper also includes policy recommendations, like keeping refugees from similar, often close-knit communities together instead of dispersing them in the camps.

Now Visions Center Founder Khaled Awamleh is pushing to get Livingston's and Riehl's report published in international policy journals. Their findings, he explains, are invaluable to getting aid, including mental-health resources, to refugees.

"People think refugee camps are good. But they are the worst! The worst!" says Awamleh, as he meets with Livingston and Riehl at Visions Center's headquarters in Amman. "It's getting worse and nobody has a solution. There's no infrastructure to support the refugees. There's lack of coordination between international donors and organizations on the ground. There's no strategic plan. Emily and Brittany, their analysis is most important. Their potential solutions are extremely helpful."

Not the same

Later, after they leave their offices for the day and the sun begins its descent behind the 2,000-square-foot Jordanian flag flying from the Raghadan Palace compound, some of the students meet at Rainbow Street to browse among its trendy boutiques. From one of the city's seven hills, the evening Maghrib prayer broadcasts from a mosque that's topped by a crescent moon and a strand of apple-green neon light. For a moment, the prayer's drowned out as a car drives by,

(continued on page 16)

(from left) Virginia Orman, Emily Riehl, and Charles Quoffie





Shopping on Rainbow Street with (from left) Virginia Orman, Emily Riehl, Brittany Livingston and Megan Alexander Perry



Charles Quoffie interned at the King Hussein Foundation.

it's radio blasting the Eagles' classic hit, *Hotel California*: "On a dark desert highway / Cool wind in my hair, warm smell of colitas, rising up in the air . . ." History and hipsters, tradition and trend: Jordan is a dizzying mix of contradictions. And indeed, standing on the street, plastic shopping bags in hand, Livingston, Riehl and their peers from the trip could be young women out shopping anywhere at all. But later, when they sit down and talk about their summer over pastries they've purchased from a favorite bakery, it's clear the girls have changed.

"I've never done anything that has had a strong impact before, and I've wanted to," says Livingston. "This type of program is so important because I'm going home with a different mindset."

Virginia Orman agrees. Orman, an IPED major (international political economy and diplomacy) at CPIA, rushed to Rainbow Street after a day of translating English and Arabic texts at Al-Quds Center for Political Studies, a nonpartisan political think-tank. Like her peers on the trip, she abstained from eating or drinking during the month of Ramadan, which ended just a few days earlier. Most of the students aren't Muslim, but they consciously made the choice "to participate with the whole country and feel like a part of the culture and not just a tourist," Orman says.

"For me, Ramadan was such a magical experience because it's like their Christmas! Every night at sunset you have dinner, or *iftar*, together, and people were really open to inviting us to that. So many times a taxi driver or somebody random would say, 'Hey, come to my house for dinner.' And that was really normal. If you did that in New York, that would be *so* weird, but here, we went to people's houses so many times. They wanted



Hello, Lawrence!: The summer included a visit to the desert at Wadi Rum.



Arabic lessons at Princess Sumaya University



Bright lights, big city: the views of Amman

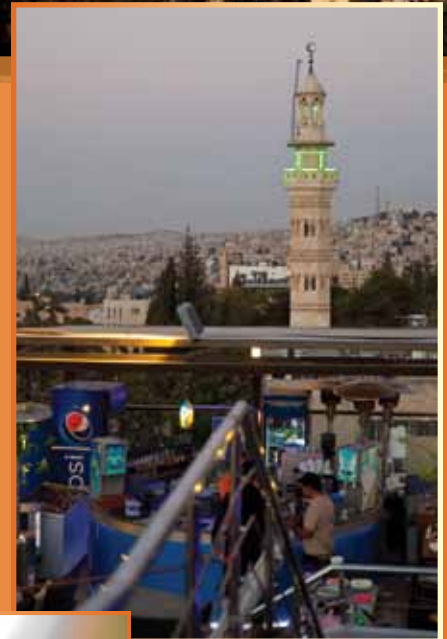
to share this experience with us,” Orman says “I’ll always remember it: the month of fasting and reflection. I feel really changed by it.”

They’re not alone. Fellow student Charles Quoffie, who had asked about the name of a kitchen in Arabic earlier that day, is a former teacher from Ghana. He enrolled at CPIA to start a new career in human rights. As an international student at UB, he’s said he’s had the experience of navigating a new country. Still, he insists the Jordan trip was equally transformative for him, too.

This summer, Robert Riggs helped him get an internship at the prestigious King Hussein Foundation, where he’s been in charge of an extensive project researching reproductive-health issues and resources that may or not be available to Jordan’s most economically and socially vulnerable. The Foundation will now share Quoffie’s findings with policymakers, journalists, scholars, and others so they can use it to promulgate targeted, highly effective socioeconomic planning, says KHF Director Aida Essaid. “Accessing information in Jordan is not that easy,” Essaid explains. “Our overall mission is to bridge the gap between research and sociology. A lot of our work is focused on social and gender-equity issues, microfinance loans to women, community-development programs.”

Quoffie is pleased. “The research I’ve done touches on my goals. It’s offered me a channel to work on humanitarian issues and it’s basically opened my eyes about the field.

“But ultimately,” he continues, “the internship has offered a lot of other things. It offered cultural experience, traveling, the education aspect of learning to speak Arabic, the social exposure to other parts of the world. It is something I will always remember.” ■



Megan Perry with Ishmael Deen, and KayJoon Quispe at PSUT.



Shoot for

the Stars

By Leslie Geary

Alumna Gloria Velasquez is determined to help others achieve the American Dream.

If she hadn't been an immigrant—no, if she hadn't been a super-motivated immigrant from Colombia who was steadfast to achieve the American Dream—it would have been easier.

A lot easier.

But Gloria Velasquez '15 had long-term goals. So, no, she wasn't going to work for just enough cash to scrape by. She was going to run her own company. That's why she enrolled at UB's College of Public and International Affairs (CPIA), where in 2011 she started working on two master's degrees, the first in in global media and communications and the second in global development and peace. Together, she figured, they'd help her launch a successful international career that would, if all went well, marry free enterprise with humanitarian work. But first she had to pay for school. Classes ended in the late afternoon, which gave Velasquez time to drive the 49-mile route from Bridgeport to Yonkers, New York, where she worked at Stew Leonard's from 9 p.m. until 2 a.m.

It was a horrible job.

“The worst!” recalls Velasquez, who graduated from UB May. “We had to wash where they processed the food, the beef. We used special chemicals and cleaned from the top down. We disinfected all the worktops.”

On the bright side, Velasquez was able to raise money, which she pooled with savings from Columbia, to buy into a cleaning franchise. She supervised a crew of eight. It was a far cry from her first gig, when she cleaned a one-room office for \$195 a month—not a lot, but she remembers her employer as encouraging.

“He’d talk to me and say, ‘Gloria! I want to see you like this one day,’” Velasquez recalls. “I’d tell him my dreams.”

Listening now

Today, Velasquez does much of the listening as a volunteer at SCORE, the national mentoring service for small businesses and start-ups. The Greater Bridgeport chapter is headquartered at the University’s Ernest C. Trefz School of Business. When she found out about the program, Velasquez joined four MBA students, and they began working with SCORE volunteers to provide an array of workshops, one-on-one help, and other services to area entrepreneurs.

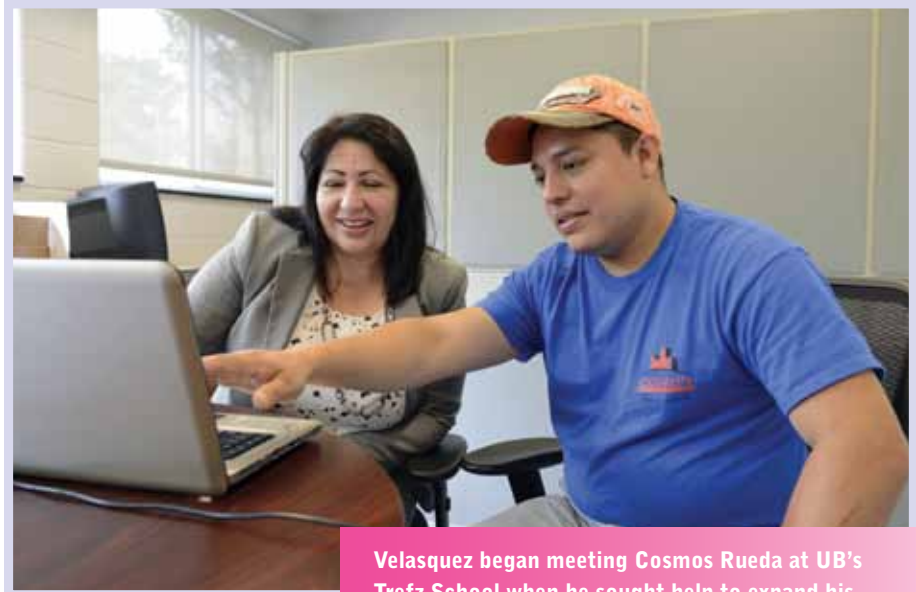
“The partnership with SCORE provides an opportunity for our students to learn firsthand how to grow businesses,” explains B-school Dean Lloyd Gibson. “They have an opportunity to work with counselors and also budding entrepreneurs. They’re working with all types of companies and existing small businesses. A big part of SCORE is to help businesses grow to another level.”

After she graduated in May, Velasquez returned to the SCORE offices at the Trefz School. She said she couldn’t imagine leaving clients whose hopes and aspirations resonated with her.

“When you come here,” she explains, “you have the American Dream for your family. But it is very hard. You can have a regular job, work 40-50 hours a week, get a car, an apartment, food, clothes. You work all the time, but it’s never enough. The only way to be very successful is to create your own job. Any person can be successful in this country, but you have to work hard.”

And work smart. Which is where Velasquez hopes to make a difference.

Prior to moving to the U.S., Velasquez had already earned a bachelor’s degree in social sciences from Univer-



Velasquez began meeting Cosmos Rueda at UB’s Trefz School when he sought help to expand his maintenance business.

sidad del Valle, one of Columbia’s larger public universities. After that, she worked at Carvajal S.A., a multinational company that provides technology, communication and other services. One day, after a lengthy discussion about opportunity, Velasquez said she and one of her bosses began a project to help people start their own microenterprises—much like she’s doing at SCORE now.

“We decided to give advice on how to open small businesses even if they had a little money,” said Velasquez. “One person started a company selling photocopies because at that time a lot of people didn’t have a computer. Another opened small grocery in a rural area where there weren’t any. Another lady made handmade dolls.”

Velasquez loved the work, but she still had her own goals to fulfill. In 1998, she sold her car, gathered her savings, and obtained a student visa to study English and earn a graduate degree from an American university. “If you get a master’s or a PhD in America, that’s a big dream for everyone. It means you’re bilingual. It’s good for the *résumé*,” she says. “It’s respected.”

She enrolled at UB’s English Language Institute. (“The idioms!” she recalls. “‘Piece of cake.’ What is *that*?!”)

And she worked cleaning homes, businesses, anywhere anyone needed her services. The payoff was great: she attracted new clients, hired more employees, and began to save. The catch: “That kind of business produces a lot of money, but it’s physical and you have to work 24/7.”

(continued on page 20)



Sara and Angel Flores asked Velasquez to help them grow their graphic design company.

She returned to UB to get her two master's degrees, receiving encouragement from CPIA Dean Thomas Ward and her professors. "The best thing in my life was to go back to school," says Velasquez. "They really supported me. Dr. Ward told me it was healthy to use my mind!"

Avoid the gray economy

Velasquez is quick to talk about her UB experience and about education in general. Meeting with SCORE clients, she invariably asks about their plans for college. She's also into documents, paying taxes, playing by the rules. Five minutes into talking to her client Cosmos Rueda at the SCORE office on campus, for instance, it's clear she has no tolerance or time for fudging things.

"With a tax identification, you can grow your business. But if you get paid in cash, you don't exist legally. You have to hide your money because there are limits to what you can put in the bank. So you can't establish credit, and—," says Velasquez, delivering the fatal blow, "—You. Can't. Grow! That's why I don't like a gray economy; it's no good at all!"

Rueda's originally from Ecuador, but as these things so often go, he works seven days a week making *Saltimbocca alla Romana* and *Gamberi fra Diavolo* at an Italian restaurant in Monroe and Shelton, Connecticut.

In addition to turning him into a great cook, his gigs as a chef have enabled Rueda to set aside earnings for Cosmos Maintenance, the company he started with his brother. They make a good team, power washing, upgrading wiring, or doing electrical, building, and yard repairs—whatever needs to be done. They recently bought a gleaming white 2002 Nissan Frontier of pick-up truck. Its doors are emblazoned with their company name: Cosmos Maintenance.

"I want to make the company strong and have people work for me one day," says Rueda, proudly showing off a photo of the truck on his smart phone.

Rueda began meeting Velasquez at the SCORE offices in March, and she's had plenty of advice for him. She wants to upgrade his website, www.cosmosmaintenance.com. The 1,000 fliers he's printed are informative, but they don't have a critically important e-mail address on them. She recommends adding it with a rubber stamp. It's not super-elegant, but Rueda won't have to waste the cards he's already paid for, and he can mail them to potential clients in Fairfield County.

"I'm focusing on offices so I can get contracts for a year or more. We can work at night. In the day, if I have a customer who calls for a power wash or something, I can do that, and I can keep working at the restaurant until I grow," he says.

Making connections

Twenty minutes later, Velasquez has made her way across Bridgeport to see Angel and Sara Flores. The husband-and-wife team have started a small graphic design firm in a cheerful second-story walk-up that's filled with plants, art, and the most extraordinary furniture Angel's made by using found objects: pieces of granite, wood, vintage sewing machines, and ladders. Velasquez shows them off like a proud older sister, before pointing to Angel's framed graphic design degree from a local community college. "Look!" she beams.

Angel is restoring a sepia photo for a client. He's downloaded the image onto an Apple computer he and Sara purchased by using his earnings as a full-time floral designer in Greenwich, Connecticut. He also designs business cards and logos, and the couple thinks that reaching out to entrepreneurs in the Latino community might be a good way to expand their start-up.

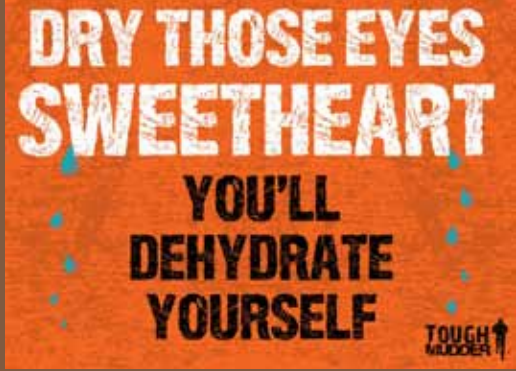
"When you start thinking about a business, you have a lot of ideas. But you have to look. You have to think, 'How much money is there for this type of thing?' You have to go step-by-step," says Sara, who keeps track of administrative tasks.

"Step by step," Velasquez echoes in agreement. "And don't lose heart!" ■

Angel and Sara Flores at their home office, which is decorated with furniture Angel makes from found objects.



TOUGH MUDDER



By Larry Orman '07

Crawling through mud, getting shocked by electricity, scaling walls, and other father-son adventures

“Are you crazy!” was the nearly unanimous, wide-eyed response when I told my friends and co-workers that I had signed up for a ten-mile obstacle-filled endurance event called Tough Mudder.

I have a growing list of wishful aspirations and improving my health always seems to be near the top. While most people my age—I remember the Age of Aquarius—might consider joining a fitness club or going on a low-carb diet to lose a few pounds, crawling through cold, gooey mud and stumbling through live 10,000-volt electrical wires is probably not what most people have in mind. Nonetheless, this summer I completed a hardcore basic-training style course with my 23-year old son and UB senior, Sam, at the New England Tough Mudder, a torturous layout constructed on the ski slopes of the Mt. Snow Resort in Vermont. Oh, yes, I made sure my life insurance policy was up to date before I left home.



All smiles, and only a little bit of dirt: Larry and Sam Orman successfully finished their first Tough Mudder.



The Tough Mudder shocked us and tear-gassed us—a dunking in a near-freezing, ice-filled dumpster took my breath away. While the cross-country layout started us out on gentle switchbacks, it wasn't long before the course turned into a series of military-style forced marches straight up and down the mountain over obstacles, turning an easy jog into a leg-dragging zombie shuffle in the brutal sun. With my calf and quad muscles cramping up in waves, no amount of biking or jogging in coastal Connecticut could have prepared me for the steep hills at that altitude. It didn't dawn on me until I passed the second mile marker that the most difficult obstacle was the mountain itself, with its grueling inclines and declines. Looking up, I thought, "They failed to mention this in the online promotional video."

My son kept me going, through encouragement, and at times, literally helping me to my feet. Crossing the finish line, my knees and elbows were bloodied and bruised—there were sharp rocks under that mud! I could barely walk the next day and going down steps was painful. How did I talk myself into this insanity billed as "Probably the Toughest Event on the Planet" with the added kicker of paying good money for my pain?

I'd like to blame it on cabin fever as a result of the long New England winter, but it started off as a "I bet you can't do this" challenge, then became a dare that neither Sam nor I could back out of. Throw in a bit of male bravado; I decided I was up to the task. My family is fairly hardy—last summer we cheerfully camped in the snow in Yellowstone National Park, hiked in a hail-storm in the Grand Tetons, and spent several days rock climbing with my sisters in the Black Hills of South Dakota.



To get a preview of what we were getting ourselves into, Sam and I volunteered the first day of a weekend event of 10,000 cross-fit Mudders. The head of the volunteers took one look at my graying hair (the average age is 29), and then asked me if I was ready to participate the next day. I thought, “I haven’t seen the course from my location, but I was a three-sport letterman in high school. I can still do straight push-ups and a few pull-ups. How tough can it be?”

It almost killed me.

Designed by British Special Forces to test the “strength, stamina, mental grit, and camaraderie” of each participant, Tough Mudder lived up to its promise. Each obstacle is aptly named and had its own particular physical and psychological challenge. The 20-plus obstacles included stops like the “Arctic Enema,” an ice water plunge; “Cry Baby,” a tunnel crawl through a tear-gas-like agent; “Everest,” a story and one-half quarter-pike ramp; “Walk the Plank,” a 15-foot leap into cold water; Berlin Wall,” a 12-foot high wooden wall; and the final barrier to the finish line, the knee buckling

“Electroshock Therapy,” a gauntlet of dangling 10,000-volt-charged wires. And in the Mudder Village, if anyone still had any strength left, encouraged by cheering crowds, participants could further test their mettle on medieval-sounding devices like the “Human Hamster Wheel” or the “Ring of Fire,” a 20-foot drop through gas-fired flames into a 10-foot high barrel of water.

It’s not a timed race, there are no medals or ribbons. The reward is a well-earned beer, a signature Tough Mudder orange headband, and a deep sense of personal achievement. (Only 78 percent of entrants actually finish the course.) Interspersed with tongue-in-cheek signs such as “Remember you signed a death waiver,” a number of the course obstacles cannot be completed alone. With Tough Mudder’s emphasis on teamwork and a no-one-left-behind ethos, I found a timely boost, a willing hand extended from the top of a wall, and a reassuring word of encouragement from strangers at memorable moments. I think that’s what brings these men and women together, a sense of community and the transformational bonding of a shared experience. Powered by a

moving, motivational speech at the start area, which also recognized families participating for loved ones and the men and women facing frontline risks, the shared challenge brought out the best in people.

To my surprise, I felt like a different person. By finishing, or just surviving, I had a sense of accomplishment I hadn't felt in a long time. Not only did I hit my target weight in preparing for it, I faced my fears and, more importantly, shared this once-in-a-lifetime experience with my son. Through his strong, good-natured character, Sam was there for me when he saw me physically hurting and seriously wondering if I was going to make it off the mountainside. We started this adventure by gently challenging each other as individuals but bonded as a father-son team within this remarkable community.

So when people learn what I did this summer and ask me if I'm crazy, embracing my new identity I say with a confident smile, "I am a Tough Mudder." ■

About the author: When not being shocked by electricity or scaling walls, alumnus Larry Orman is director of publications at UB. His son, Sam, will graduate from the University in 2016. After recovering from the race, Larry and Sam went on to complete a second Tough Mudder with a team from UB called "Tough Muggles" in August. It didn't get any easier, but it was a lot of fun.



Back row, from left: Author Larry Orman, Sam Orman, KwonSook Gerena, Nikolai Corley, Truman Peterson, Constant van Winden and (front row, from left) Steven Boitano, Carolyn Bonini, Sungkeel Yamada completed Tough Mudder Long Island in August as team "Tough Muggles."



photo: Nathan Forget



Work that Travels

A United Nations Internship

By Jackie Hennessey

As Janaina Bordignon heads to her internship at the United Nations headquarters, she passes the flags of many nations waving gently in the wind, the East River in the distance, and the sprawling UN campus. She often finds herself struck by all that happens at the UN and out in the field around the world. “It gives me such a sense of purpose,” she said.

From the time when she was a young girl growing up in Brazil, Bordignon cared deeply about social-justice issues. So when she told her friends she was moving to the United States to pursue her master’s degree at UB, studying global development and peace, “They all said it was obvious I was going to work at the UN,” she said, “but I never took them seriously because I never thought that could be possible.”

This summer Bordignon did indeed work at the UN, interning with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. She assisted in researching and designing several modules of the UN Police Division’s Gender Toolkit, a major project that will launch in November, providing guidance for UN police officers on best practices for investigating sexual- and gender-based violence. The Toolkit will be used as UN police officers assist police forces in nations that are rebuilding after a conflict in keeping with international standards.

Bordignon helped develop teaching modules that focus on recruiting female officers, developing a sex-crimes unit, and sensitively interviewing a victim of sexual or gender violence. She also contributed to other gender-related programs being developed and implemented throughout the peacekeeping mission worldwide. The Gender Toolkit is part of the UN’s ongoing global effort to recruit more female police officers into its police operations around the world and to encourage police forces in host nations to do the same.

Ban Ki-moon, the UN Secretary General, has endorsed it, saying that increasing the participation of women police officers in peacekeeping will make the UN a stronger organization and is vitally important around the world. “By empowering women we build stronger societies,” he said. “When a crowd needs to be controlled, a house searched or a suspect questioned, a policewoman’s presence can defuse tension and guard against offense.”

What matters most to Bordignon is that the work will travel—to small villages and cities to mountainous regions and rural outposts from the Congo to Haiti across Central America and Europe, affecting women literally across the far corners of the globe, women and girls who are victims of gender-based violence, who have been voiceless, not knowing where to turn.

Somewhere, she says, a young woman who may have once felt she couldn't speak out about what has happened to her, will seek help from an officer and be heard. It is an issue Bordignon feels deeply connected with. "My hope is that, with better processes and more awareness in the communities, women, girls, men and boys are better protected from all types of gender-based violence and sexual violence," she said.

In August, the UN hired Bordignon as a contractor so she can continue to work on the project. "It's an incredible opportunity, and it couldn't have happened to me if I had not come to UB," she said.

Thomas Ward, vice president of international programs and dean of the college of Public and Inter-

national Affairs who Bordignon calls "an encouraging and inspiring mentor," said the UN was a perfect fit for her. "Janaina has a passion for human rights and for addressing problems of social injustice," Ward said. "She represents the University well and her commitment to the fields that are the basis of her passion resonate very strongly with the UN and its mission." UB is a global education leader and one of only 12 universities in the U.S. recognized by the UN with NGO status.

Navigating an international, high-stakes, high-pressure project will be applicable to whatever she pursues later, she said.

"It was not an internship about making copies," she said. "I've had tremendous responsibilities and challenges." She learned a great deal from her supervisor and the department members who are "extremely hard working and also nice and patient," she said. "They explained everything to me about the UN, the mission, and our work."

Bordignon's journey to the UN and UB was a circuitous one. In high school, she was equal parts



indifferent student, rebel, and class clown. During the first weeks of classes at Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos in Brazil, where she majored in teaching English as a second language, that attitude continued until her professor told her, “I hope you have a student just like you one day.” In that moment, Bordignon snapped to attention. “I said, ‘What am I doing?’” and she doubled down, getting A’s in every course, every semester. After graduating, she taught English as a Second Language at a language institute and became an administrator. She began community organizing around issues of gender- and sexual-violence, and she decided to pursue her master’s.

While waiting to chat with Erika Castillo, international admissions counselor at UB, at the International Education Fair in Porto Alegre, Brazil, Bordignon picked up a pamphlet about the Global Development and Peace program. “I said, ‘This is everything I am looking for.’ My life directed me there,” she said. “Erika was so motivating. She helped me through every step of the process.”

Castillo said Bordignon “embodies all of the ideal characteristics that we look for in a potential student. Her story is an ode to hard work, dedication, and

perseverance. She is absolutely exceptional.”

Bordignon had been living on her own since she was 16, so financial aid was really important and she received a partial scholarship and a fellowship. When there was a fire at the house she was renting, University staff made sure she had meals to eat. When she began the rigorous UN internship application process, professors and staff “were there for me. They knew how important this opportunity was for me,” she said. “They go the extra mile for you all the time.”

She, in turn, dove into life on campus, participating in the Model UN and an array of clubs and volunteer activities. “I wanted to try everything,” she said.

She is continuing her graduate studies, commuting to campus from New York as she works at the UN. On weekends, she’s busy exploring New York neighborhoods, finding all the best thrift shops, meeting friends, and continuing to speak out on causes she cares about, currently volunteering for Street Action for Equality & Respect, a non-profit group that fights street harassment.

Mostly though her focus is on her work at the UN. “To be part of such an important and huge project is amazing,” she said. ■



News Lines

UB Awarded DOE Grant

Funding will help support disadvantaged students.

By Leslie Geary



The DOE grant will provide more advising for UB students.

The University of Bridgeport has been awarded \$220,000 Department of Education Student Support Services grant (SSS) to continue its work to retain and support disadvantaged students.

The grant was awarded through a competitive grant process to institutions of higher education that provide students with opportunities for academic development,

assistance on basic college requirements, and other programs that enable them to successfully finish college.

The SSS grant awarded to UB funds programs for fiscal year 2016.

Fifty-seven percent of UB undergraduate students are either first-generation college students, qualify as low income, or are disabled.

“Many students in our local colleges face obstacles that prevent them from staying in school and graduating,” said Rep. Jim Himes (CT-04), who supported UB’s grant application “Whether those obstacles are financial, academic, or simply being the first person in their family to go to college, they are hard to face alone. The Student Support Service grants help fund the personnel and facilities to increase the retention and graduation of these students. It’s a program that unquestionably provides an enormous benefit to students in Connecticut and their families and I’m proud the federal government is able to provide this support.” ■

Good Job!

Saudi Student Club wins award from Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission.

The Saudi Students Club has won \$2,000 from the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission (SACM) in Washington, D.C., for the club’s numerous activities, volunteer campaigns, and other events.

The SACM administers programs that help meet the educational and cultural needs of Saudi citizens studying in the United States. In September, 334 student clubs competed at SACM’s 38th annual meeting for club presidents.

The Saudi Student club at UB won second prize for its extensive outreach and activities. In 2014-15, it hosted more than 90 events, including academic training for its members, volunteering, outreach, and social gatherings.



The club’s activities “exceeded and went beyond all levels of expectations. Many of the activities were open to all UB students, and were not limited to Saudi students,” said its campus adviser, professor Khaled Elleithy.

Hosam Faqeha, president of the Saudi Students Club and a mechanical engineering major, received a certificate of achievement and the \$2,000 prize, which will support ongoing club events. ■ – L.G.

Professor and club adviser Khaled Elleithy with club president Hosam Faqeha, student Mona Al Nasser, and Dean of Students Edina Oestreicher

News Lines

Engineering News

Two UB students win prestigious UPE Scholarships.



Two School of Engineering students have won scholarships from Upsilon Pi Epsilon (UPE), the international honors society for students majoring in computing and information disciplines.

Wafa Elmannai, a doctoral student of computer science and engineering, was one of three students in the U.S. to win a \$2,500 UPE Executive Council Award.

Larissa Vilaboim Oliveira, who earned a bachelor's in computer engineering in May 2015, won a \$500 UPE Honorable Mention Award.

UPE was founded at Texas A&M University, College Station, in 1967, but now includes international chapters at colleges and universities throughout North America and overseas. Dedicated to recognizing academic excellence in computing and information disciplines, the UPE Executive Council each year evaluates scholarship applications from undergraduates and graduate students at universities across the United States.



“The awards are a testament to the fact that hard work and perseverance know no limits. Both Wafa and Larissa are exceptional role models for students in engineering—men and women alike!” said computer Abhilasha Tibrewal, the UPE faculty adviser at UB and a professor of computer science and engineering.

Elmannai was previously awarded a \$20,000 fellowship by the American Association of University Women; she was the only student from Connecticut to win the prestigious grant. She has also been recognized as one of the most innovative women in Connecticut by the Connecticut Technology Council, which in 2014 selected her for one of its Women in Innovation awards.

Oliveira, an honors student from Brazil, was on the President's List throughout her entire UB career and last spring was awarded the 2015 School of Engineering Academic Achievement Award. During the 2014-15 academic year, she served at vice president of the UB chapter of the Society of Women Engineers and was captain of the women's volleyball team. ■ – L.G

Engineering students
Larissa Vilaboim Oliveira
and Wafa Elmannai,
winners of UPE's
scholarships



All Together Now

UB School of Engineering professors awarded CQIA Gold Innovation Prize for connecting engineers globally.

School of Engineering team Susan Kristie, Dean Tarek Sobh, and Associate Dean Khaled Elleithy had the vision to bring engineers together, despite the miles.



If ideas are the currency of trade in academia, then conferences are its central banks where researchers, scholars, and other experts share valuable information on vital topics that shape our world.

Yet all too often, conferences are prohibitively expensive or time-consuming to attend, so the exchange of research and ideas, however great, gets mired in logistics.

UB School of Engineering Associate Dean Dr. Khaled M. Elleithy and Dean/Senior Vice President for Graduate Studies Dr. Tarek Sobh set out to change that, by launching the first online engineering conference in the world. They were helped by Susan Kristie, the administrative manager at the School of Engineering. Now, thanks to their success in seamlessly bringing engineers together for over a decade, UB has won a Connecticut Quality Improvement Award Competition (CQIA) Gold Innovation Prize.

CQIA awards recognize organizations that develop products, services, or processes that are new to Connecticut and have reached their internal or external markets in the

last five years.

Sobh's and Elleithy's contributions were first made in 2005, when they began the International Joint Conferences on Computer, Information, Systems Sciences, and Engineering, known as CISSE.

"At the time," said Elleithy, "it was an unheard of solution because anyone with an Internet connection—authors, presenters, and attendees—could participate. It attracted people who typically couldn't go to conferences. We have people from the U.S., from Asia, from Africa—from many, many countries."

CISSE participants have submitted more than 6,000 research papers. Half of those have been published by Springer, the world's largest engineering publisher, and they are easily accessible at <http://cisseconference.org/springer-proceeding-books/>.

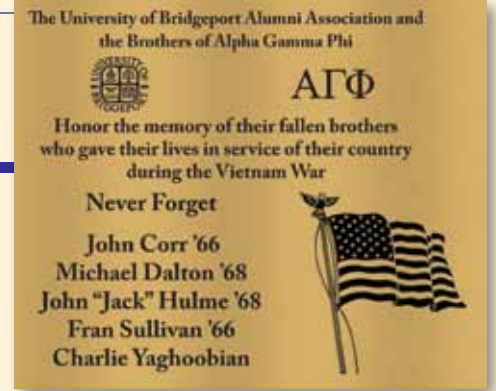
More importantly, CISEE events continue to bring together engineering experts who have much to share with the world, but not always the means to do so. ■

— L.G

News Lines

Honoring Their Service

UB pays tribute to former football players who died in Vietnam and opens a veteran's park in memory of all servicemen and women.



They were a band of brothers at the University of Bridgeport who played on the football team, pledged at Alpha Gamma Phi, and shared a determination to serve in Vietnam. All five were killed.

Now, nearly five decades later, alumni John “Jack” Hulme ’68, John Corr ’66, Michael Dalton ’68, Frans Sullivan ’66 and Charlie Yaghoobian were honored during the 2015 Welcome Back Weekend on October 10 by former AGP fraternity brothers who have pushed to keep the men’s memories alive by donating a plaque in their honor.

It was dedicated at Veteran’s Park, a pocket park on University Avenue that has been renamed to honor all UB veterans.

“Thanks to the dedication of former AGP brother John Buckman ’68 and fraternity president Bob Padula ’68, we were able to see these alumni honored and have a significant place on campus for all of our alumni who are veterans. UB is proud to honor their service,” said Alumni Director Aimee Marcella.

She added that UB President Neil Salonen and George Estrada, vice president of facilities, “had the vision to create a special park on campus where people can reflect upon what these men and women have done for our country. They are an inspiration to us all.”

All AGP brothers are encouraged to reach out to John Buckman ’68 who can be emailed at johnfbuckman@aol.com. For more information about veterans at UB, or to share your veteran’s story, please contact alumni@bridgeport.edu or (203) 576-4133. ■ – L.G.



Engineering Solutions/ Designing Answers

Jani Pallis's Design and Innovation class talks to the pros about how to break the mold.



Engineering Design: it may sound like an oxymoron. One's about math, angles, rules. The other? Color, aesthetics, creativity.

Think again. As Jani Pallis's Design and Innovation class learned over the summer, the key to developing cutting-edge products depends on experts' ability to harness engineering and design in a way that creates totally new possibilities.

"Innovation isn't just tweaking an existing design, but coming up with out-of-the-box solutions," Pallis said. "Students really need to understand about working with the stakeholders, the end-users."

So Pallis came up with three assignments for the students; they had to design the perfect footwear for triathletes; create a solar-powered device, and invent a special, affordable saddle to be used by disabled riders.

Then she had students talk to experts about their ideas. They began by interviewing members of UB's track team. UB alumna Amelia Amon '81, an industrial designer who's established a career creating solar-powered products, answered questions about eco-friendly design. Finally, the class spent a day at Ox Ridge Hunt Club in Darien, Connecticut, interviewing Lois Brockman, a

licensed physical therapist from the Pegasus Therapeutic Riding Program, which serves riders who are paraplegic or who have other physical needs.

Designing gear for a horse and rider, for instance, turns out to be a perfect engineering and design challenge. As Brockman told the class: "The design and function of equipment is critical to my riders' success. They have their own needs, and the equipment needs to enhance their function. That's where it's great for engineering students. The saddle is applied to a human being and a horse: two dynamic systems you have to take into account."

Students listened, and even sat in a saddle or two, as part of their field work. Concluded Brockman: "It was wonderful for me to speak to Jani's students. They can look at the mechanics of what could be developed and they were very interested." ■ — L.G.



Straight from the horse's mouth: engineering students got tips about designing saddles for disabled riders after visiting Lois Brockman (in blue shirt) and some four-footed friends at Pegasus Therapeutic Riding Program.

News Lines

Introducing...

New facilities, programs open for the academic year.

The University's much-anticipated nursing program launched this fall, taking residence in a glittering 7,000-square-foot suite that includes a ten-bed skills center, medical simulation labs, community health room, and a lecture theater on the seventh floor of the Health Sciences Building.

"It's tremendous!" says School of Nursing Dean Carol Papp. "Students will be able to learn in a state-of-the-art facility. It's the perfect place for RNs to advance their education and training."

The hybrid RN to Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) Completion Program was designed for RNs to earn four-year degrees by combining online coursework with lab sessions at UB. The first group of registered nurses (RNs) began classes in August.

There are other changes on campus. Crews systematically dismantled Schine Hall throughout the summer before cutting down the remains of the 127,000-square-foot building at the end of August. "It's like cutting down a tree," said Vice President of Facilities George Estrada. As Schine was down, KBE Construction Company began building UB's newest residence hall at 40 Rennell Street.



Home of the new RN to BSN's training center. Classes began in the fall of 2015.

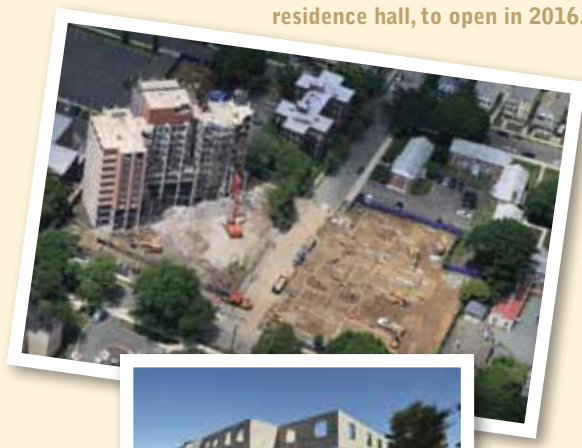
Cortright Hall, built in 1890 by New York socialite Lavina Parmly as a summer house, got a facelift, too. Historic-restoration specialists from Cenaxo, Inc. and E.J. Dahill replaced the building's roof, Yankee-style gutters, decorative rosettes, and decades'-old shingles. The Victorian building, which is home to the Office of University Relations, also got a fresh coat of paint. The upgrades to Cortright were funded by a third round of grants from the Connecticut Historic Preservation Commission.

"I think Miss Parmly would be very pleased," said Estrada. "It looks like something out of Newport. That said, we very much appreciate Gov. [Dannel P.] Malloy's vision to support this project and historic preservation throughout Connecticut." ■ — L.G

A bird's eye view shows Schine before demolition and the start of UB's newest residence hall, to open in 2016.



Connecticut Historic Preservation grants have provided upgrades at Cortright Hall.



Going, going, gone! Schine Hall's final demolition in August.

On the Menu

Changes to campus dining cater to UB tastes.



Take-out meals, Starbucks coffee, a commuter dining plan, and an abundance of new food, including bulk snacks and candy, are on the menu at UB, thanks to several changes that have been made by University Dining Services for the academic year.

Sodexo revamped meal and snack offerings after surveying students and faculty about their dining needs, said UB Director of Dining Services Tony DeLuca. “It was really to keep ourselves current with students’ and faculty dining choices. We did a lot of focus groups to find what they’re looking for,” DeLuca said.



The refurbished UB Grill, located at The Hub @ Marina, still offers classics, but this year, items like smash ’burgers and home-made potato chips are served up with an innovative twist, said DeLuca. Sandwiches sold at the UB Deli are made with just-from-the-oven bread, he added. ■

– L.G



Money-Making Idea

The Ernest C. Trefz School of Business kicks off a new business competition for high school students.



Teenagers with great business ideas may be in the money, thanks to a young entrepreneurs’ competition that kicked off in September at the Ernest C. Trefz School of Business.

The Business Plan Competition was created to encourage young entrepreneurs to develop business concepts while getting direction and guidance from UB professors and local entrepreneurs.

The competition is open to all Connecticut high school and community college students.

On November 21, competitors will make five-minute PowerPoint presentations to a panel of UB judges. Participants will also produce an 11-point written business plan that includes topics like industry analysis, a marketing plan, and assessment of risk.

The process, said Trefz School Assistant Dean Tim Raynor, “will allow students to gain practical insights about starting, operating, and growing a business, while gaining real-world experience about the business-plan process.”

Awards and categories include: \$500 for Best Overall Business Plan: Community College; \$500 for Best Overall Business Plan: High School; \$250 for Best Plan second places for both high school and community college; and high school and community college awards of \$250 each for Best Presentations. ■ – L.G

Focus on: Thomas O'Hara '84



Background: Tom O'Hara is a member of UB's Board of Trustees and a longtime supporter of the University. His father, Raymond O'Hara, taught at the School of Education, his mother took evening English classes on campus, and all four of O'Hara's siblings attended the University. He earned a bachelor's degree in marketing.

Notable accomplishments: After graduating from UB, O'Hara was hired by International Food Services, Ltd. He eventually bought the Shelton, Connecticut-based company, which sources, packages, and sells specialty foods to discount food clubs, including Sam's Clubs, BJ's Wholesale Club, and Costco.

UB is in your blood. Was there any question you might attend another school?

I was ranked seventh in my class so I had a lot of options for college, but UB was 50

bucks a semester. Fifty bucks! I was working full-time. I worked at Stew Leonard's and Ships Restaurant in Westport. My first years, I worked at Stew Leonard's during the day and Ships at night. Then I did an internship at Sikorsky in the area of product support. One semester, I worked at Sikorsky and Ships at the same time.

Do you remember your first memory of UB?

One of my earliest memories of campus is when my dad took me to his class. He taught secondary education. I was ten years old, and most of his students were pretty 20-year-old girls. There were two things: one, they were so nice, and two, they were teachers. I was like, "Oh, Dad! Take me back." He would bring me to school once a semester to sit through one of his classes. I thought it was neat of him, speaking up there.

You honored him by donating the Raymond O'Hara Auditorium to the business school in 2014.

The coolest moment was showing it [the auditorium] to my dad. He was 86 and he had about six weeks left to live at that point. He looked at me and said something I'd never heard him say before, "My father would be so proud of me today."

What do you want people to know about him?

He was a humble, sweet man. I never saw him get cross, even with me. Even in challenging moments. He was an intellectual. For him it was about feelings and life. I remember one day I explained the company [IMS]. "We do this, etc., etc." When I finished, he said, "That's great, but none of that can be taken with you. It's all earthly stuff."

You've traveled to 60 countries during your career at IMS. How did your experience at UB help prepare you for that?

I remember one house party; I was the only American kid there. I was more adventurous. I wanted to see what the world was like. The biggest take away for me is that people are much more the same than different than around the world.

Tell me more about IMS.

We were marketing Bigelow, then we started sourcing other products. We started importing food gift packs, selling them to food clubs. Today, we are in the fields, sourcing agro-products from around the world and promoting more efficient practices. We're farm to shelf, from buying seed to production to packaging in the glass jar.

Any favorite products?

Sure. We call them diamond-in-the-rough moments, when we find a factory or a grower that's doing something different. There's a type of olive grown in Sicily that we found. Instead of letting the olives fall into the nets, the Sicilians pick them off the trees and they stay bright green. They're a lot more expensive but there's nothing like them! They're a little meatier. The soil, the sun—it's perfect! There are artichoke hearts we found in Peru. We knew it would sell well. Our guy grew 100 acres the first year. Now it's 2,000 acres. We saw what he can do, and we got him to do bigger and better. These are cream-of-the-crop growers, and our job is to find them. Currently, we're importing specialty foods products from 30 different countries.

What is your hope for UB; where would you like to see it in five years?

I'd like it to have 7,000 students and a greater awareness in Fairfield County. When we were kids, it was UB, Sacred Heart or Fairfield University. UB's not in the lexicon of Fairfield County kids anymore. We have to refresh the brand. The Board needs to be active about selling UB.

What's UB's strongest selling point?

Our UB kids are our best advertising. They're hungry. We have a large international student base. I'd tell someone who's 18 or 19, "Expand your horizons by learning about students from all around the world." We're right on the water and we're fairly reasonably priced compared to other colleges in the northeast corridor.

— Interview by Leslie Geary



Faculty Lines

UB's New Provost

The University appointed Dr. **Stephen Healey** as the school's next Provost, effective October 1, 2015.

Healey, who succeeds Provost **Hans van der Giessen**, joined UB in 1998, as an assistant professor of World Religions at the then International College. He subsequently filled various roles, advancing in academic leadership on campus. In 2010, he was named Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, and in 2013, he was appointed Associate Provost, where his more recent duties included chairing UB's NEASC self-study during the 2014-15 academic year.

Dr. van der Giessen will continue to serve UB as a senior member of the President's Office.

Healey's appointment concludes a rigorous national search led by the Boston-based firm, Isaacson, Miller.

"After weighing their talents and experience, and receiving feedback from the UB community, the strongest choice was very clear," said President **Neil Salonen**. "Our institution is well positioned to pursue the challenges that we have identified and committed to in our recent NEASC self-study, which Steve has so ably chaired. I have great confidence that he can provide the academic leadership to achieve those goals . . . Our UB community is indebted to Dr. van der Giessen



for his leadership and guidance over the last three years."

Healey said, "I am delighted by this appointment. I look forward to working with President Salonen, the deans, and the whole University community to advance the University's academic mission."

Healey earned a PhD in Theological Ethics from Boston College in 1996. He holds a Master of Arts in Theological Ethics from Andover Newton Theological School and a Bachelor of Arts in Religion from Eastern

Nazarene College.

A respected scholar, Healey's doctoral work focused on the interaction of religion and society, studied from the perspective of the social sciences, philosophy, and ethics. His discipline reflects on social and institutional change in reaction to encountering significant ideas—a field of expertise that he has brought to his teaching, research, and leadership roles at UB. ■ – **Leslie Geary**



Healthy Reading

David Brady has signed a contract with Rodale, a major publisher of health and wellness books, for *The Fibro-Fix*. It will be released in the spring of 2016. Brady is no stranger to publishing. His earlier works include *Dr. Brady's Healthy Revolution: What You Need to Know to Stay Healthy in a Sick World* and *Dr. Brady's Healthy Revolution*. ■ – **L.G.**

High-Tech Acupuncture

Patients have been well served by acupuncture for thousands of years, so can the ancient Chinese practice be improved?

To find out, Acupuncture Institute Program Director **Jennifer Brett** and Physician Assistant Institute Assistant Director of Clinical Director **Medeya Tsnobiladze** questioned patients about a relatively new technique to the field known as electroacupuncture.

During electroacupuncture, an electric current passes between pairs of acupuncture needles to enhance the efficacy of the treatment for pain and other ailments. The procedure dates back to the 1930s, but until Brett and Tsnobiladze's study, no one has published data about patients' physical wellness immediately following the procedure, said Brett. The survey included 163 patients who were

Jennifer Brett and Medeya Tsnobiladze (second and fourth from left) testing the effects of electroacupuncture



treated at the UB Clinics from May to November 2014.

"There was a little more cramping, but otherwise their satisfaction with electroacupuncture was the same [as regular acupuncture]," said Brett. "There was no sign of

adverse effects, either."

Brett and Tsnobiladze are currently repeating the study using the electroacupuncture on more sensitive parts of the body, such as the abdomen or over the head, to identify and differences in patient safety and satisfaction. ■

– LG

2+2 = Enriching Experience

Each year, students from around the world come to UB to study. But thanks to the University's network of academic institutions overseas, UB faculty can enhance their teaching with international travel.

This summer, **Mary Jo McGonagle** and **Karl Heine** traveled to Anhui Polytechnic University in China to teach design. It was the first time that UB professors have taught at Anhui. They were accompanied by Heine's

wife and artist, Kyle, who also helped teach. Their trip was part of the University's 2+2 Program, which sends faculty members to teach at international universities over the summer and allows overseas students to study at UB for two years.

"The head professors did everything possible for us to have a rich experience," said McGonagle, a graphic design professor at Shintaro Akatsu School of Design.

Classes were taught with help from an interpreter. "Through adjustment and being creative on a daily basis everyone was able to learn and grow," said McGonagle. "It was a mutual learning experience."

Meanwhile, Anhui students arrived at UB over the summer. "They want a Western influence to add cultural diversity to their students," explains McGonagle. ■

– Jose Cabrera '15



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.

1973

Alumnus and former Purple Knight **Robert "Bob" Corvino** lit up the football field at UB, lettering in the sport as a varsity player for two years and scooping up plenty of awards along the way, including the Scholar-Athlete Award from the Fairfield County Chapter of the College Hall of Fame and the Outstanding Physical Education Student Award. Now Corvino has been inducted into the Rockland County 2015 Sports Hall of Fame and will be inducted into the inaugural class of the Nyack High School Athletic Hall of Fame this fall. "It's great to be recognized at this point in my life," Corvino says. After a distinguished, award-winning career as a high school football coach, Corvino retired but continues to serve on the Section 9 Football Committee in New York. He and his wife, Betty, live in Huguenot, New York, where he plays golf and babysits his grandson Alex.

1988

Cynthia Gallatin was recently promoted to vice president and chief operating officer for online programs at Quinnipiac University, where she will serve as a member of the President's Cabinet and Senior Leadership Team. "I am enthusiastic for the opportunity to work with members of the university community to foster the growth of innovative learning at Quinnipiac," she said in a release. Before joining Quinnipiac, Gallatin held positions in

sales and marketing for Survey Sampling Inc. and at Prentice-Hall. She received her MBA in marketing from UB.

1980

Ted Drozdowski's band, Scissormen, recently releasing its sixth album on July 31. The album is already in rotation on Sirius/XM and many radio stations around the country. To learn more about his sound, which links music's traditional roots with psychedelic guitar, check out the Fall 2015 issue of *Guitar Player* magazine, which is running a feature story on the band. Writes Drozdowski: "I graduated with a B.A. in journalism in 1980, but obviously went astray from there!"



Time to network! UB alumni gathered on June 18 at Sign of the Whale in Stamford, CT, to meet potential employers in a relaxed and social atmosphere. Pictured (left to right): Askar Morisseau '13, Nancy Haddad from U.S. Computer Connection, Chelsea Robinson '15, Elena Cela '13, Anne-Fried Drath '09, and Alona Gaiek '15.



In Memoriam

Professor emeritus Richard C. Doenges passed away peacefully on August 24 at his home in Gainesville, Florida. A beloved professor of English at UB for over 30 years, he touched the hearts of students while earning the respect of faculty. His passions included literature and especially all things related to Herman Melville, classical music, nature, and his wife, Audrey Clark. He lived his life as he once wrote, "Love your neighbor for his sake, not yours. Let's all enrich this world, staving off death with good health and goodwill."

Born on October 19, 1927, in Fort Wayne, Indiana, Doenges served in the army before earning his B.A. in English at DePauw University and a master's

at Brown University, where he met his first wife, Elspeth Hart Doenges, who predeceased him. His entire professional career was spent at UB, where he was associate professor of English for many decades and then later served as dean of the School of Arts and Sciences. He is survived by his second wife, Audrey Clark; his brother Norman Doenges and his wife Pam Doenges; son Richard Crawford Doenges, his wife Mary Beth Brown and grandsons, Ryan H. Doenges and Douglas B. Doenges; his son and UB alumnus James M. Doenges '87 and his wife Teresa H. Doenges; his daughter Catherine E. Doenges, a professor of sociology at UB, and her partner William Burke; and numerous nephews and nieces.

Hats Off!

UB honors five at the 2015 Distinguished Alumni Awards Dinner.

By Mike Patrick



In good company: (from left) Distinguished Alumni Shawn Sequiera '10, Stephen Diaz '98, Naomi Volain '83, Amerlia Amon '81, and Roland Brooks '78

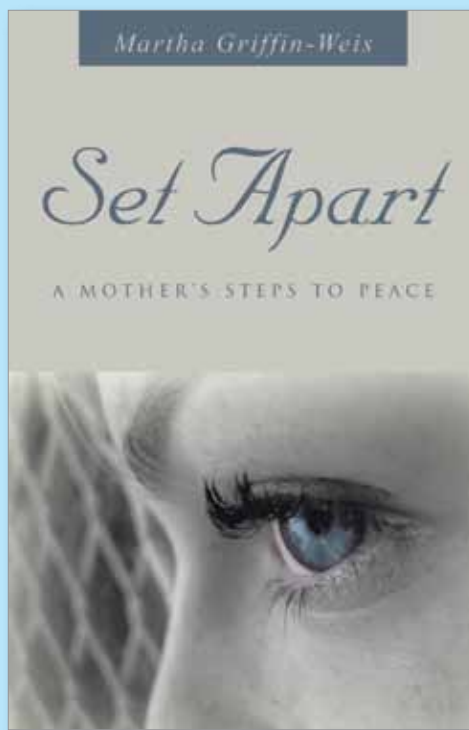
The University of Bridgeport recognized five Distinguished Alumni for their loyalty to the school and their accomplished contributions to their professional fields on September 17.

This year's honorees included Amelia Amon '81, an leading innovator in eco- and industrial design; award-winning film designer Roland Brooks '78; Stephen Diaz '95, '98, a vice president at Covanta Energy; Shawn Sequiera '03, '10, Captain of the Shelton Connecticut Police Department; and Naomi Volain '83, globally

recognized science educator.

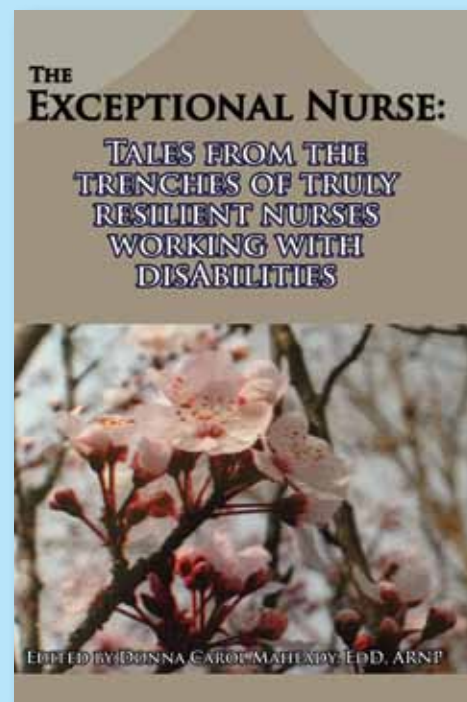
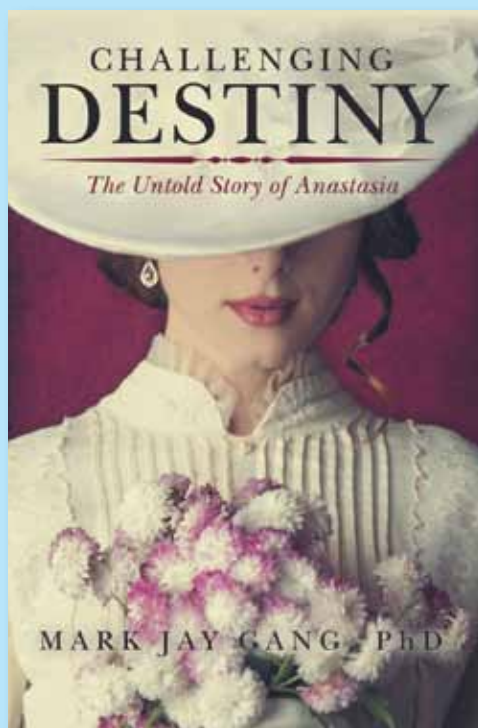
"Every year, the Distinguished Alumni Committee has a tough time deciding whom to award, which is a good thing! We have an amazing group of talent to choose from that represents a wide range of fields, professions, and successes. This year's recipients embody everything from science innovation, cinematography, law enforcement, education and business," said UB Director of Alumni Relations Aimee Marcella.

Book Lines



In *Set Apart: A Mother's Steps to Peace* (Westbow Press), alumna **Martha Griffin-Weis** '12 gives voice to parents of children with autism and to activists who blame childhood vaccines for causing complex disorders in brain development. When her son, Ben, is diagnosed with autism, Maggie must come to terms with how the diagnosis will change their lives. As Ben grows from childhood to adulthood, Maggie describes how the ramifications of autism upend their rather normal life, how she learns how to live with that reality, and in the end, finds peace that has previously eluded her. Weis, an alumna of UB's Acupuncture Institute, speaks publicly about being the mother of a son with autism.

History's mysteries come to life in *Challenging Destiny, the Untold Story of Anastasia* (iUniverse) by alumnus **Mark Jay Gang** '69, '72. When Bolshevik revolutionaries stormed the Romanov's Russian palace, many wondered if the youngest daughter Anastasia escaped or perished with the rest of her family. In his first novel, Gang tells a fictional account of Anastasia's secret life. Spirited and sweeping in scope, *Challenging Destiny* will keep readers spellbound with its tales of destruction, heartache, romance, power, and mystery.



In *The Exceptional Nurse*, alumna **Donna Maheady** '77 inspires with true stories about nurses who overcame disabilities to pursue their careers. Strong, resilient, and persistent, the nurses Maheady writes about are exceptional in their field. Maheady is a graduate of UB's School of Nursing.

— Leslie Geary

Side Lines

UB's Golden Boy

Shortstop John Ascenzia earns a National Gold Glove for his defensive prowess.

By Chuck Sadowski

University of Bridgeport senior shortstop John Ascenzia closed out his time in a Purple Knights' uniform by being selected as the 2015 American Baseball Coaches Association/Rawlings NCAA Division II National Gold Glove Winner. He is the first UB player ever to be honored with a national ABCA/Rawlings Gold Glove. In 2013, UB outfielder Jesse Solar received a regional

Gold Glove accolade.

In 2015, Ascenzia, who became the University of Bridgeport's all-time leader in hits at the plate, finishing his career with a total of 183, was nearly flawless in the field taking care of 189 chances with only three errors all season long. ■

Shortstop John Ascenzia doing what he does best



Side Lines

Among the Blessed

Though an injury kept him from the major leagues, UB pitcher Rick Smith says he regrets nothing.

By Mike Patrick

Rick Smith's life changed at the University of Bridgeport in the early 1970s, and not only because his still-standing pitching record had the major leagues knocking on his door.

Though a turn of events that kept him from the Yankee dugout still stings, Smith's physical education degree from UB and subsequent stellar teaching career made him a hero to his students, and that gives him immense satisfaction in his retirement.

"I believe God has a hand in these things. I met my wife at UB. We're married 39 years now," said Smith '74, who was inducted into UB's Athletic Hall of Fame in August. "It just seems that's where I should have been, when I look at it now."

Smith's high school coach in Wrentham, Massachusetts, who had attended the former Arnold College, suggested the University come to see him play. UB coach Fran Bacon liked what he saw and recruited Smith in 1969.

In his sophomore year—the first year students were allowed to play varsity in those days – Smith racked up 88 strikeouts. That record has yet to be broken.

Smith said he also remembers having once struck out 17 in a single game against Western Connecticut State University.

But in his junior year, a debilitating injury struck. "I had a dead arm," he said. "Overuse, I would think."

As a result he missed almost the entire 1972 season.

By the time he was asked to play in the Atlantic Collegiate Baseball League, however, "My arm came alive again and our team won the championship."

The season earned him an award for outstanding pitcher.

"They got me an apartment in the Bronx with two guys from Fordham who were on the team," he said.





“The Milwaukee Brewers came to my parents’ house and offered me a contract.”

—Rick Smith '74

“We had the best summer ever.”

Smith pitched 107 strikeouts in 102 innings for the ACBL. That gave him the exposure he needed to be selected as a member of the U.S. team competing in the World Amateur Tournament in Nicaragua.

“They picked eight college pitchers, and I got picked,” he said. “It was because of what I’d done in the summer. People had seen that.”

People also saw when Smith pitched a shutout against Panama and won the Silver Medal for the United States.

“The Milwaukee Brewers came to my parents’ house and offered me a contract,” he said, adding he decided instead to complete his senior year at UB.

At the end of the season, he signed as a free agent with the New York Yankees.

“Everything went my way that first season in the minors,” he said. “In one game I had 15 strikeouts. I left that season thinking it was going to be great.”

By January, he couldn’t pitch anymore.

Smith grew quiet when he remembered the shoulder pain, and how there were no MRIs back then to detect

early what his doctor later confirmed — that he had suffered a career-ending torn rotator cuff.

The Yankees took him off the field for six weeks to see if he would heal.

“I didn’t,” he said. “That was it.”

Armed with the degree he earned at UB, Smith went to work as a high school science teacher in Massachusetts.

“I got released by Yankees in December, and in February I started teaching and coaching almost immediately, and I absolutely loved it,” he said. “That took the sting out of getting released, because I loved going to work every day.”

He later rose to be a vice principal, then principal. He retired in 2009 after nine years as superintendent of schools for the North Attleboro, Massachusetts, school district. He had been an educator for 34 years.

“I loved my life as an educator, without question,” he said. “I gotta tell you, I’m among the blessed.” ■



Side Lines

Taking the Term “Student-Athlete” Seriously

Purple Knights win as athletes and in the classroom.

By Chuck Sadowski

Many people today see the term “student-athlete” as a contradiction. Most folks think someone cannot be a success either on the field or court or in the pool and still be a standout student. That is simply not the case the University of Bridgeport, where since the 2012-13 academic year, seven Purple Knights have been recognized with national Academic All-America honors, including consecutive Capital One National Academic All-America of the Year won by men’s swimming’s Ruben Gimenez. Prior to three years ago, only one UB student-athlete earned national Academic All-America honors in Cathleen Meadean from softball, who was a Second team national selection in 1993.

Let’s take a look at the impressive accomplishments of the various Bridgeport athletic programs this past 2014-15 school year.

On the women’s side, the volleyball team won its third consecutive East Coast Conference title, hosted the NCAA Division II East Regional for the second straight year, and made its seventh straight NCAA appearance.

The soccer team finished as the ECC runner-up and made its seventh NCAA trip in the last eight seasons. The powerful UB gymnastics team finished second in the nation and won its seventh consecutive ECAC Division II crown. The swimming team finished 23rd in the nation, and the lacrosse team posted 12 victories, the most in program history.

On the men’s side, the basketball team made it a three-peat of ECC titles and made the program’s 21st NCAA appearance. The swimming team finished eighth in the country at the NCAA National Championship Meet, and the baseball team finished second at the conference championship tournament.

To go along with top-notch athletic moments in 2014-15, three student-athletes earned national Academic All-America honors in Ruben Gimenez, First Team award winner from men’s swimming, Tabea Rauschenberger, Second Team award winner from women’s soccer and Ying Shen, Third Team award winner from women’s volleyball.

In 2013-14, three student-athletes earned national Academic All-America honors in Gimenez and Julia Hansson from women’s soccer, who were first team picks, and Oscar Pereiro from men’s swimming who was a Second Team national selection, and in 2012-13, Julia Hansson began Bridgeport’s run of national Academic All-Americans with a Second Team selection.

As you can see, the term student-athlete does mean something at the University of Bridgeport, as the Purple Knights continue to outshine the opposition in both their athletic endeavors and in the classroom. ■

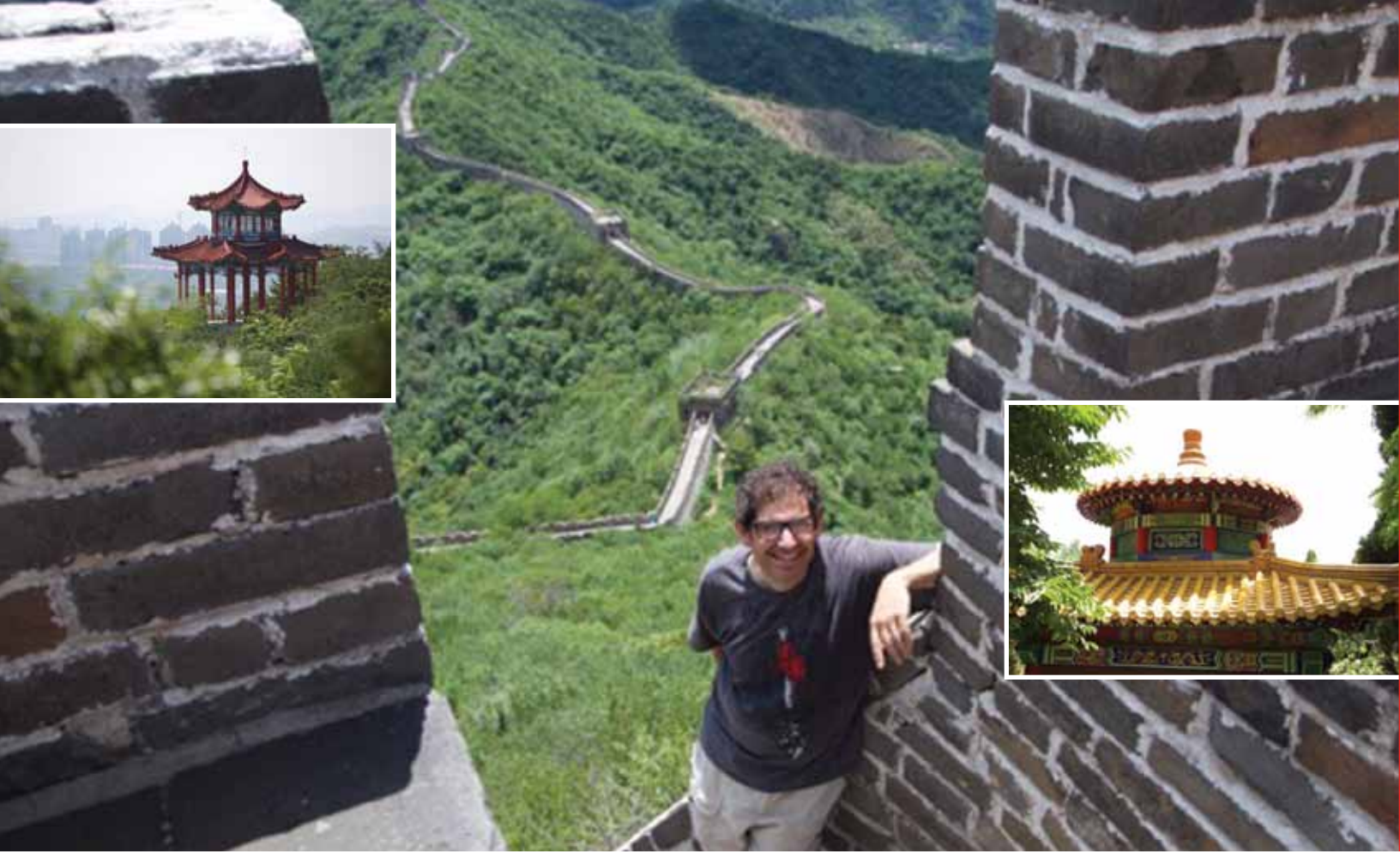


Hail to the champs! The women’s volleyball team won its third straight ECC title, gymnasts scooped up their seventh Division II crown ...





... while men's teams scored high across the board, and three athletes earned Academic All-America honors.



Closing Thought: Stranger in a Strange Land

By Stephen M. Perle

Much like the protagonist in Robert A. Heinlein’s classic science fiction book whose title I’ve copied, I was bewildered when I arrived in Yantai, China. Certainly, it wasn’t what I expected. I’ve traveled extensively, both for pleasure and to lecture or teach at various chiropractic conferences, but this summer was different: In China, I was instantly ignorant, illiterate, and generally incapable of verbal communication in ways that I have never experienced before.

It was exhilaratingly scary, frustrating, totally foreign—and I wouldn’t have missed a minute of this experience for the world. I had come to China as part of UB’s exchange program with Ludong University, where I was to teach biology to bachelor’s degree biology students, who must complete a course in their major in English. I ended up leaving with a newfound respect for those who give up so much and brave the unknown to come to our country—my great-grandparents, our international students at UB, other immigrants.

The first thing I did when I arrived was turn to my usual traveler’s safety net: the Web. But this time, it didn’t help. Most of the answers about Yantai and China I got were transliterated into Latin characters, but there were practically no signs using Latin characters anywhere, except for the signs on American chains, like Starbucks and McDonald’s.

My ignorance was reinforced for me the first morning. I woke to the sound of loud yelling and multiple explosions. It turned out the explosions weren’t the opening salvo in a war, but fireworks from the nearby university-catering hall for a wedding. The yelling, I was later to learn, stemmed from a Chinese belief that it is

a healthy thing to do when exercising in the morning. With the sunrise around 4:30 a.m., I rarely slept late.

By the third day, I was ready to venture into the city center to try to eat there. I found a street food vendor who made one kind of sandwich, which she sold at different prices. I held up one finger and the cook held up one finger. We smiled at each other. So far so good, but then she started asking me something in Chinese. I kept shrugging my shoulders and she decided to show me that different quantities of meat were different prices. We had a fun time trying to work this out because she initially showed me the amount with the fingers of one hand. I later learned Chinese count one through nine with only one hand.

Back at campus, the biology classes I was teaching were familiar material to the students. They had previously taken them in Chinese but were required to take one class to learn biological terms in English. Some students told me that they planned on transferring to UB or to come to the U.S. for graduate school. Given their limited English, my students were reticent to speak in class. I expected this, I've lectured at a French chiropractic college for the past three years, and have long since discovered that interacting outside of the classroom is always helpful to students and teacher alike. Food also helps, as it's fundamental to people's cultures, leading naturally to talking about our differences and similarities.

One night I took four students out for a banquet. We had ten different dishes, and the students wanted to pay because they thought the meal was too expensive for me. But I was insistent. I had invited them, after all, and all of the food only cost \$48. It was difficult to explain in a way that was not insulting both that I am not rich and that this was for me an inexpensive meal, especially given what we had. Truly, the economic differences between our two countries were almost incomprehensible to my students. Students once pointed me to a street vendor for dinner. They said it was very good and cheap. It was both good and only cost 47 cents. I ate there three times.

Over restaurant meals, food-truck stands, and outside of class, the students began sharing more. They talked to me about jobs, homes, stores, cities, transportation, entertainment, even politics—well, just about everything. Not one of my students had siblings, so they were very curious about my relationship with my sister, sister-in-law and what it was like having two daughters.

I found that the “Great Firewall of China” has restricted their understanding of the world outside of their country. Before each class and during breaks I would show them photographs from UB, around the United States, and the world. The only two landmarks the students could identify were the Statue of Liberty and the Eiffel Tower. Other places, like the Taj Mahal, were unknown to them. Still, my students were curious. Some said they wanted to study at U.S. my students were curious about our life, as we are about them.

Every time I travel I am constantly reminded of what Mark Twain wrote in *Innocents Abroad*: “Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow mindedness and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime.”

Certainly, living in China reinforced my respect for the audacity, courage, and determination of non-English speakers who come to the United States to study and live—especially those who come from a country that uses a different written character set. I couldn't help thinking about my own great-grandparents. How they must have struggled when they emigrated from Ukraine at the end of the 19th century, likely speaking and reading only Yiddish and Hebrew. It also reinforced my sensitivity for non-native speakers' fears of speaking English. I'll use this here at UB by helping my international students understand we are not judgmental about the quality of their English communication and are willing to help.

China was the 27th country I've visited and my experiences only furthered my desire to learn about other cultures. They also made me appreciate more fully the great gifts I have been given because of the accident of being born here in the U.S. I look forward to and really love it every time they stamp my passport at JFK and say, “Welcome back home!” ■

Stephen M. Perle, DC, MS, is a professor of clinical sciences at UB's College of Chiropractic. His love of travel and photography inspired one daughter to get a job as a United Airlines flight attendant, so Perle can finally fly for free on standby. His other daughter is majoring in advertising photography. Perle hopes the payoff will be access to very, very good camera lenses.





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