

# UB Knightlines



Moving  
Forward



Inside: Biosurvival - From Immigrant to Doctorate - Annual Report

# President's Line

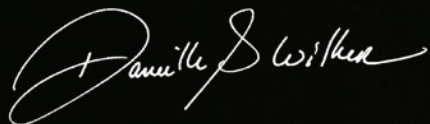
After two years at the helm of University of Bridgeport, I am excited to report that we are moving forward. And not just slowly. We seem to be racing toward our goals.

Enrollment is up at a time when enrollments at many other schools are down. We admitted over 1300 students in Fall 2022 alone. Thirty percent of the new undergraduate students are athletes, including members of five new varsity sports, including NCAA Division II Men's Lacrosse and Men's and Women's Cross Country and Track and Field. We have added new workout rooms to Wheeler Recreation Center and campus is bustling with these undergraduate athletes and graduate students from every corner of the globe.

Alums and donors are also stepping up, with George and Carol Bauer giving generously for the Entrepreneur Center and scholarships to the forthcoming on-campus Manufacturing Center, the Trefz Foundation gave donations for School of Business scholarships, UB General Endowment, and the Innovation Center, the Heckman family gave another large donation to upgrade the Heckman Center advising rooms, and hundreds of others from the public and private sectors stepping up to support the future of UB. I am also pleased to say that this is only the beginning. We are traveling at top speed, and I hope to be able to share more good news soon.

In this issue of *Knightlines*, you'll read a wide variety of tales about students and alums stepping up to the plate and sprinting toward their goals. My favorite story might be about our biology and health sciences students hiking for three days in Vermont. It is also an important reminder of what happens when we take the road less traveled and start seeing things in a new way. That certainly describes the path we have taken at the University of Bridgeport.

A year ago, I told you that we are here to stay. This year I can tell you confidently that we are moving forward. I hope you will join us on the path.



Danielle Wilken  
President



# UB Knightlines

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**ON THE COVER**  
Larissa Weber is one of  
many stars on UB's new  
Track and Field teams.



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# UB Students Survive the Wild

Last August, nine University of Bridgeport Biology and Health Sciences students traveled to Vermont to learn to survive in the wilderness. They came back with their minds and their hearts altered by the experience.

This annual wilderness camping trip is a core component of HSCI 329-HB, Outdoor Recreation, and BIOL 201-11NS, Biosurvival. Outdoor Recreation is a three-credit course that teaches students how to manage risks and safety outdoors, develop outdoor leadership skills, and learn to adventure outdoors while leaving no trace. It includes both classroom and field experiences, from paddling in a sea kayak to setting up a campfire. It overlaps with the Biosurvival class, in which students learn to recognize local plants and animals and learn how they can be used to survive in the wilderness, pitch a weather-resistant camp, make fires, purify water, and navigate on and off trail.

**Professor Bren Harrison  
leads UB students into  
the wild.**



“The Biosurvival course is intended to give students a way to integrate all the topics typically covered by a Biology student and apply them to wilderness survival,” said Dean of the College of Science and Society Kathleen Engelmann, who discovered and re-created this classic UB course a decade ago. “For example, we use Anatomy and Physiology to inform wilderness first aid, Microbiology to inform water purification, ecology to talk about reading the landscape and much more.”

Before the students hike, they study birds, amphibians, and reptiles, as well as edible and non-edible plants. They learn how to identify poison ivy, how to orienteer and navigate through the wilderness, and how to make a fire,

purify water, and hang a bear bag. “For the Biology majors, it substantiates what they’ve learned in their classes,” said Professor Jim Casey. “They see how genetics, microbiology, and everything else is connected to a broader ecology.”

Professor Casey assisted Professor Engelmann in the past, and now led the expedition with colleague Professor Bren Harrison. Originally from Bridgeport, Professor Casey is passionate about bridging the gap between “city folks like myself” and the natural world. “When I get to share that, and they get into the swing of it, it puts your life in perspective,” he said philosophically. Maybe that’s why, although faculty like Casey give up a vacation week to lead these expeditions, no one complains.

Unlike Professor Casey, Professor Harrison grew up in the woods. “My parents started me horseback camping when I was two years old in the foothills of the southern Appalachians,” she said. “The students here usually don’t have that kind of experience. We have the opportunity to take away any intimidation they might feel and it bonds them to each other in a way that a walk to Seaside Park does not.”

Outdoor Recreation student Alexandra Mones agreed with that assessment. “We all came from different backgrounds, and I would have never expected us to come so close in a more ‘normal’ setting,” she said. “I was able to appreciate and reconnect with nature and take a moment of silence and breathe.”

The adventure this year began in the Lye Brook Wilderness west of Stratton Mountain in Vermont. One first-year student, and a mix of others, mostly juniors, camped at a pond in the





“This was definitely an experience that I will be sharing for the rest of my life.”

Green Mountains the first night, then began the hike through the forest. Biosurvival student Ryan Doan thought that this choice of setting helped him “become closer with nature and the earth,” while Aaron Caldwell called the Green Mountains “perfect for the everyday family who wants to get out into the wilderness.”

During the first full day, Professor Casey took some students up Stratton Peak while Professor Harrison took the others on a slightly easier path. As Jemari Morgan warned future UB scholars: “Be ready to hike and make sure you know you are fit for this trip.” After meeting up on the Appalachian Trail, the group encountered a few thru-hikers walking from Georgia to Maine, something that put their own efforts into perspective. Crystal Rankin was “shocked to my core to see so many women hikers that were okay doing this long journey by themselves.” Nevertheless, their own journey was no walk in the park. Julia Gavriilidis called it “the single most challenging thing I ever did in my brief twenty years.”

Along the way they learned the basics of thermal regulation and caloric intake, health and wellness, what animals eat, and even how time works in the wilderness. They also learned how to deal with the annoyance of mosquitoes and black flies. “I’m from the city and I don’t like bugs,” says Jermaine Hall. “But it was worth the experience.”

That night the exhausted students camped at an Appalachian Trail shelter, and the sense of adventure turned into a sense of camaraderie. “Everyone looked out for each other out there, whether it was waiting for the person in front of you to catch their breath, or in my case helping me out with my food,” said Crystal Rankin. “This was definitely an experience that I will be sharing for the rest of my life.”

On the third day, they hiked off the “AT” into real wilderness, bushwhacking through the rugged and secluded forest. They found a wonderful swimming hole in a backcountry stream and dipped their tired bodies in it,



finding a different kind of refreshment and relaxation, born of struggle and sweat. “The back country is rare here in the northeast,” says Casey. “To go into a wilderness area is totally different than the students’ everyday life.”

On the final night, tired and happy, they watched the sun set on Branch Pond. They had come a long way, and had a story that they could tell for the rest of their lives. But more than that, they came away with a better appreciation of the natural world. “The Green Mountain Forest has been around for millions of years and has thrived,” says Joe Robles. “It is only fair we as humans treat it with respect and admire its beauty.” ■



# Student-Centered

## Inaugural Cohort of UDL Teaching Fellows Graduates

When University of Bridgeport joined the Goodwin University family in spring 2021, a significant priority was to bring Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to the UB campus. In November 2022, University of Bridgeport graduated its first cohort of UDL Teaching Fellows, with the goal of bringing a more student-centered approach to UB classes. The program and training was made possible thanks to a generous donation by UB alum and trustee Fred Moses ('74).

Over the course of six months, 12 UB faculty members across various programs completed 8 three-hour workshops, where they took an in-depth look at their teaching methods and examined ways to make their courses more inclusive of diverse learners. When applied proactively, UDL makes learning more accessible to learners of all backgrounds, meaning students are more engaged and connected to the material.

“As faculty today, we have to understand that just talking at someone is insufficient,” says Dr. Diana LaRocco, Dean of the School of Applied Liberal Arts and Social Sciences and Director of the Goodwin University Institute for Learning Innovation. “Since the 1970s, we have learned much more about how humans learn. And so, it’s really taking the best of what we know about human learning and using that to ensure that we are meeting the students where they are and bringing them to graduation.”

Dr. LaRocco designed and implemented Goodwin’s UDL Institute and is now playing an integral role in bringing this framework to UB. “Our UDL Institute was deliberately designed to engage faculty in critical self-reflection on their teaching to identify what is working well and where students seem to struggle,” she says. “The aim is for faculty to be more intentional in the design and implementation of their curriculum.”

UB Faculty and Staff receive their UDL diplomas

The core of UDL is to create curricula and learning experiences that are more intentional, inclusive, impactful, and integrated. UDL

is grounded in fundamental research into neuroscience, cognitive psychology, and the science of learning which indicates that more learning occurs when individual differences are anticipated and deliberately planned for in the curriculum.

After all, students not only arrive in class with a range of skills and experiences, but they are often dealing with personal stressors like work and family that can affect their ability to focus on their studies. In addition, college students around the world are collectively coping with how the Covid-19 pandemic disrupted their learning while they were still early in their high school careers. These students are now attending college classes and many lack the confidence they need to be successful. Furthermore, university campuses are home to diverse groups of students with intersecting identities — no two learners are the same, and no two learners engage with their education in the same way. All these factors and more speak to the need for educators to build inclusive and supportive learning environments.

Professor Yvrose Romulus teaches in UB's Ernest C. Trefz School of Business. While working toward becoming a UDL Teaching Fellow, she looked at two courses, MGMT 200: Workforce Dynamics and MGMT 302: Multicultural Management. She worked to eliminate fear and negative perceptions around topics in her business courses. "By centering UDL guidelines in my teaching, I can use approaches to teaching that help shape students' thinking in a broader aspect and cultivate knowledge while minimizing anxiety, allowing them to complete more complex tasks with less burden," she said. "In the end, students embrace learning with less fear, leading them to think more positively and gain more confidence — they will hopefully welcome challenging tasks and develop a love for learning so they can thrive in their careers."

UDL flips the script on teaching and learning by addressing barriers to learning before any instruction occurs. It's an approach to education that allows educators to focus

**Professor Michael Ciolfi speaks to a group of students and parents about UB**



“One of the most important principles of UDL is its emphasis on identifying and eliminating barriers to learning before students even start the course.”

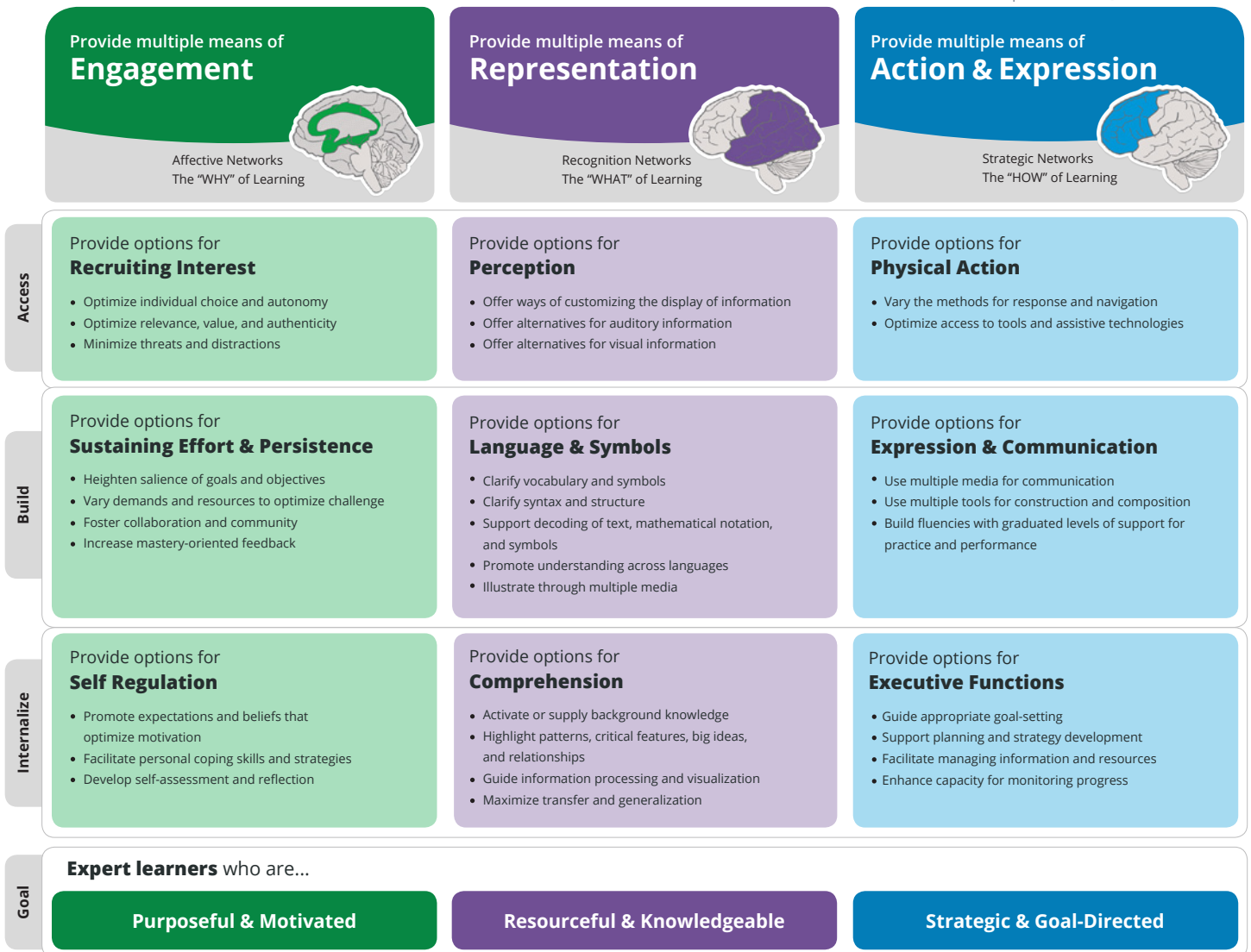
– Yvrose Romulus, Adjunct Instructor, Development Officer

on student relationships and gives students more ownership and flexibility in their learning. Choice, flexibility, and student-faculty relationships are some of the more prominent themes in UDL courses. More students can succeed when they are given flexibility in how they learn and demonstrate their knowledge.

“The UDL principles and concepts are dead simple yet over-the-top effective,” says Michael A. Ciolfi, Dean of the College of Health Sciences. During his time in the cohort, Ciolfi worked closely with the instructor of CS 721 (Clinical Services I) to implement UDL principles into the design of this course, adding simulated patient encounters in order to practice critical patient intake skills such as collecting patient histories and performing physical exams. To allow for this practice, the amount of time students had to see patients needed to be reduced. Despite the reduction in patient appointment times, Dr. Ciolfi notes, “One amazing result from this change was that the number of patients seen by the students nearly doubled — this was the result of students becoming more confident and efficient in delivering effective patient care.” In the future, Dr. Ciolfi hopes to gradually remove written exams from this course and replace lectures







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with voice-over PowerPoint presentations and videos.

Nursing Professor Maureen Wright notes that her time at UB's UDL Institute helped nudge her thinking beyond her previous knowledge base to a new level of understanding of today's college students. "As a seasoned educator with over 35 years of experience, I was confident I knew a lot about teaching and instruction, but I didn't feel I had my finger on the pulse of the learners anymore," says Wright. UDL helped her meet the needs of learners affected by the pandemic and allowed her to better understand and connect with the students of today. For example, she realized that she wasn't getting through to them about the importance of professional appearance and behavior. One UDL tool she applied was to create a "Dress Rehearsal Checklist" for students to give feedback to each other before clinic in the hopes it would become a learned behavior in their future professional lives.

Dr. David Oberleitner implemented UDL strategies into PSYC 103: Introduction to Psychology, giving students multiple ways of interacting with and mastering course

materials. "Having an opportunity to set aside time to be mindful and reflective on my teaching practice has been a valuable experience," he says. "UDL helped me reimagine my expectations about how I should approach certain topics and ways to encourage and motivate both novice and expert learners in my courses." Students' self-stigma about being "bad at science" has been a particular issue, and as one UDL solution he put more emphasis on how many students got through this part of the course successfully and were even excited about it. Using different audio and video formats to present the course's neuroscientific material and connecting it to more approachable topics made his class more accessible to all sorts of learners.

The second UDL cohort at University of Bridgeport will be assembling in summer 2023, and more professors will be joining this vital form of faculty development. "If we always do what we always did, we will get fewer results," says LaRocco. "What UDL does when applied promptly and reflectively and reflexively and proactively, is that it allows the long legacy of UB to live on." ■

# A Better Way

## Alumna Reflects on a Journey from Immigrant to Doctor of Health Sciences

By Abigail Levandoski

Dr. Paula Garay wanted to help people who are going through similar circumstances she faced as a child. Now, with three degrees from University of Bridgeport she is doing just that.

When Paula was five years old, her mother left Chile for the United States, leaving her four children in the care of family members. Her mother spent the next seven years working multiple jobs to support her family back in Chile in the hopes that she would be able to bring her children to the United States. Paula's mother went for more than three years without taking a day off from work. "I didn't see my mother for seven years," said Garay. "That's part of my trauma. I've had a tug of war with myself about it, especially now that I've had my own three babies."

Paula came to the U.S. to be with her mother when she was 12. She arrived as an undocumented immigrant faced with mapping out life and school in the United States while getting to know her mother again. She spoke no English at first, but she learned fast and by her second year in Trumbull schools, she no longer needed ESL services. By high school, she was fluent in two languages and dreamed of going to college. "I had good grades and a great SAT score, but because I didn't have any papers, I wasn't



Dr. Paula Garay and her family

allowed to go to college,” said Garay. “I started exploring the idea of moving out of the country. I almost went to China because I was desperate to go to college.”

After graduating high school, Paula couldn't go to college right away. Instead, she began working multiple jobs, paying out of pocket for community college classes to further her education. It was then she found herself at risk of being deported. “ICE was looking for me to send me back to Chile,” said Garay. “I ended up finding this amazing lawyer who helped me get my papers, so I didn't get deported.” Paula had to pay for all her lawyer's fees by herself, putting off her dream of going to college to secure her status in the United States.

By the time Paula arrived on the UB campus as a student for the first time, she was 23 years old and working three jobs. “I was working at night as a CNA, and I had two jobs during the day,” she said. “I was attracted to the IDEAL program at UB.” At the time, the IDEAL program helped adult learners earn their bachelor's degree with accelerated and online courses.

While studying for her bachelor's degree, Paula met her husband, who was studying sociology at the time. William Garay graduated with his bachelor's degree from University of Bridgeport and is now a police Sergeant with the Stamford police department.

A few years after earning her bachelor's degree in Human Services, Paula went back to earn her MBA at University of Bridgeport. “I love the fact that I have all my degrees from UB. I think that's very unique. I fell in love with UB because the professors are just amazing. I knew when I was doing my bachelor's degree that I wanted to stay.” Paula knew early on that she wanted to work with people like herself. She earned her MBA and immediately began working toward her Doctor of Health Sciences degree — all part of her plan to reach her career goals.

“I didn't want to be a medical doctor or work in healthcare in that sense. To make a bigger difference, I wanted to work behind the scenes in healthcare policy and healthcare administration,” she said thoughtfully. “I needed my MBA to lead people, and the classes I took when I did my doctorate taught me things I use daily in my career today.”

Dr. Garay was working in the medical field when she learned that OPTIMUS Health Care was looking for a director to launch a program for women and girls. Knowing she wanted to help immigrants since she first arrived in the United States, she saw this as a perfect opportunity to bring her ideas to Bridgeport. At OPTIMUS, she launched and is now leading the emme coalition, an acronym that stands for empowerment, mindfulness, motivation, and education. The program helps women and girls in Bridgeport overcome the same barriers she faced as a young immigrant, providing financial help, access to resources, counseling services, and life-planning assistance.

Patients come to the emme coalition through referrals from local organizations, hospitals, OPTIMUS Health Care, and the local community connections Garay has built throughout her career. “Most of these women and girls are victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse. 100% of them have experienced trauma,” she said. “We see a lot of generational trauma and generational abuse. Many of these women are moms, and we're trying to help them break those cycles.” The emme coalition has a team of community health workers, program coordinators, and social workers who screen clients and collect data on the types of services and resources they need.

All the services the emme coalition offers to these women and girls are free of charge, funded through a grant from the Fairfield County Community Foundation's Fund for Women & Girls. This past summer, FCCF also helped Dr. Garay secure funds to send ten Bridgeport girls to Camp Hope. Sponsored by the Center for Family Justice, Camp Hope allows children to experience summer activities and undergo intensive group and individual therapy for the abuse they've endured. She's hoping to send 10 more girls next summer.

Today, Paula, her mother, and her siblings are all U.S. citizens. Her mother is still living in the Trumbull, CT, house

that Paula first lived in when she arrived in the U.S. at age 12. Thanks to her mother's enormous sacrifice, her siblings all had the opportunity to attend college. “If we had stayed in Chile, I don't think any of us would have gone to college,” she declared. And as hard as it was being away from

her mother for seven years, Paula says it was all worth it. “I don't know exactly the situation she was in,” she continued. “She felt she needed to provide for us; that was the only way. It's not something we talk about often, but I know it weighs heavily on her.”

Through her work, Dr. Garay hopes to help people understand the dire circumstances that bring undocumented immigrants to the United States. Paula's mother traveled thousands of miles, leaving her children for seven years to achieve a better life for her family. “The anger and animosity toward undocumented immigrants is unnecessary. They are not taking any resources because there is nothing at the government level for them. That's why programs like emme have to exist.” That is also why she shares her experiences, because she wants people to feel confident in their ability to succeed, even when life throws so many challenges at them. “As hard as it was, I never felt like I couldn't do it,” she said confidently. “Even when I was at risk of being deported.”

The emme coalition helps women of Bridgeport create life plans. They've seen many women grow and succeed because people like Paula and her team are by their side. “That was always part of the plan,” says Garay. “I wanted to come to Bridgeport and give back. I wanted to be the person I needed when I was a child.” ■

“I remember thinking to myself there has to be a better way.”



# George and Carol Bauer

## Boost Business and Manufacturing on the UB Campus

Philanthropists George and Carol Bauer, who have a long-established commitment of support for University of Bridgeport, have invested an additional \$2 million to enhance the future of business and manufacturing on campus.

One million dollars gifted directly to UB will ensure the longevity of the Innovation Center in Bauer Hall, a resource for student-entrepreneurs and Connecticut businesses that comprises a podcast studio, maker space, conference and presentation rooms, individualized computer work stations, collaborative “brainstorming booths,” and lab areas that provide a professional, high-tech environment to students as well as the local community. The Bauers’ previous \$2.7 million gift enabled the creation of the Innovation Center, which houses the Student Entrepreneur Center (SEC), the SEC Club, a Technology Commercialization Group (TCG), and the Bridgeport Accelerator Program. Their additional gift will establish an endowment for a Director, Assistant to the Director, Entrepreneurs in Residence who provide support, and other operations of the Center.

“Giving to an endowment is a great idea,” said George. “We want to be supportive of building the Center and want to be sure that there is money that earns income and continues in a sustainable way for the future.”

**George and Carol Bauer receive their honorary doctorates at the 2023 graduation ceremonies**

“This will ensure the long-term health of the Innovation Center,” agreed Elena Cahill, Vice President of Innovation, Strategy, and Advancement. “Stewardship is a mission we share with the Bauers.”

A second gift of \$1 million to Goodwin University will facilitate recruitment for the planned extension of Goodwin’s manufacturing program to the UB campus. “If you have a passion for a new good or service, you need a place to facilitate that passion,” George pointed out. “That’s what the Innovation Center is all about, just like the Manufacturing Center is about giving options to young people who want to work with their hands.”

This Manufacturing Center will host majors from Goodwin’s Manufacturing, Machining, and Logistics program, one of several cross-pollinating initiatives planned for the new partnership between the schools. The Bauers’ donation will provide the ability to recruit students via a strategically targeted scholarship fund.

“This scholarship allows students interested in something like welding to learn in proximity to a four-year program,” said George. “They will get training for meaningful and well-paying jobs — and have the opportunity to take courses in philosophy, literature, and mathematics.”

“I think we have to work harder in our educational system to find out what their passion is and then find a job that matches that,” agreed Carol. “Then we can work on giving them the facility and skills they need.”



With a master’s degree in engineering, George spent his long career at IBM in a variety of executive positions including marketing, finance, and business systems. After retiring in 1987, he founded an investment banking firm, The GPB Group Ltd., and serves on numerous corporate boards. Carol Bauer serves on the board of trustees at Norwalk Hospital, founded and led the hospital’s ER Reception Volunteers, and serves as an on-call volunteer chaplain to assist grieving families and sick patients.

In 1989, they founded the Bauer Family Foundation to support healthcare and education initiatives, seeing their good fortune as an opportunity to give back. “We need to think about stewardship, not just of financial resources but our skills and gifts as well,” said George. “Stewardship is a mindset as much as anything.”

The fact that these donations benefit students at both UB and Goodwin also demonstrates the synergy between the two institutions and their missions, particularly forays into certificate programs and other non-traditional education. “We think that collaboration is marvelous,” said George. “Bringing the perspective of Goodwin, especially with a manufacturing center, is brilliant.”

“The Bauers live their values,” said President Danielle Wilken. “Not only do they support causes that they believe in, they roll up their sleeves and engage with the individuals and institutions they support. They are there for our students.”

“The Bauers’ gift is yet another step in creating the cross-culture between the two universities that we envisioned two years ago,” added Goodwin’s president, Mark Scheinberg. “There are common themes at play that we can capitalize on: entrepreneurship, innovation, workforce development and, most important, service to our students. The Bauers’ demonstration of trust in us today means life-changing advantages for students, their families, the employers, and their communities.”

It comes as no surprise that the Bauers also love the new leadership at University of Bridgeport. “A key element is not just the programs but the leaders,” said George. “One of our successes commercially has been picking the right people for the right enterprise, and that is just as important in non-profits. Investing in leaders like Danielle Wilken and Elena Cahill is something we believe in.”

Finally, the Bauers see their generous donations to UB and Goodwin as part of their larger mission to help underserved communities. “We really feel strongly about the direction they are going,” said Carol. “We all share the idea of leveling the playing field and Bridgeport is the perfect place to do that.” ■



## Pick Yourself Up and Move Forward

“Some of us fall off track,” Dr. Trisha Bailey spoke from the stage of the Hartford Healthcare Amphitheater to both the undergraduate and graduate ceremonies on May 6, 2023. “But how you pick yourself up and move forward is what matters.”

At the age of 13, Bailey migrated from Jamaica to the United States and became the first in her family to graduate college, receiving her B.A. degree from UConn where she also ran track. She went on to garner graduate degrees and become a successful businesswoman with over 20 years in the medical equipment industry, the owner of 15 very successful companies, and the founder and CEO of Bailey’s Pharmacy & Medical Equipment & Supplies, through which she provides care for the disabled. She has also conquered the real estate market, becoming the richest woman in Jamaica. Her many honors include being named the 2023 JP Morgan Chase and ONYX Magazine Woman of the Year. Recently, she made the largest donation in athletics history to

the University of Connecticut.

Along with Dr. Bailey, the University of Bridgeport trustees awarded honorary degrees to philanthropists and long-standing UB supporters George and Carol Bauer, and retired UConn men’s basketball coach Jim Calhoun. “It’s not about finding yourself,” Calhoun said. “It’s about creating yourself.”

The graduate student address was given by Nicole Caruso, who is receiving her master’s degree in Public Health, while the undergraduate student address was given by Kiana-Edith Robinson, who will receive her Bachelor of Science in Accounting. Robinson mentioned the struggle of learning through Covid-19. “We made new traditions; we grew our own culture,” she said, exhorting her fellow graduates to take that can-do attitude into the future. “Write your own book.”

Dr. Bailey had some final advice for the graduates. “Be kind and loving in every single thing you do. Be intentional in your efforts and be kind in your work.” ■

**Dr. Trisha Bailey demonstrates the can-do attitude that UB students aspire to**

# Dental Hygiene Students Provide Care to Those in Need

by Liz Belleau

In late 2021, University of Bridgeport was awarded a \$225,000 Community Health Grant by the City of Bridgeport as part of the American Rescue Plan. After months of meticulous planning, training, and assembling necessary equipment, a team of Fones School of Dental Hygiene members treated their first patient onsite at Bridgeport Rescue Mission, using mobile dental equipment and tele-dentistry technology.

The team was able to bring dental hygiene care to those who need it, in a place where they can easily access it. The patients treated at the Mission were cared for by Fones Dental Hygiene students, who were overseen by Director Manski, Professor Amanda Sargent, and Professor Bianca Palumbo. “The community at large is not aware of how their oral health impacts their overall health and are so grateful for the services we can provide,” says Sargent. “As we partner with more members of the healthcare community to deliver

interdisciplinary care, our students truly gain an appreciation for the fact that we don’t just clean teeth, we can be life savers.”

The dental care clinic hosted at Bridgeport Rescue Mission was the first of many clinics this program and team will host. The Fones School of Dental Hygiene has just recently joined a groundbreaking new partnership with Bridgeport Hospital Obstetric Clinic to help provide care and education to pregnant women to promote the importance of their own oral health and the oral health of their babies.

“As early childhood dental caries is still the number one disease facing children in America, we are able to educate new moms on how oral care affects both them and their children,” continued Sargent. “We decided, post-Covid, if getting patients to come to us was a problem, we should bring the care to them.” ■



One of UB's many patients gets a smile tune-up

## Finance Students Win Second Prize in Global Trading Challenge

On October 28, 2022, a University of Bridgeport student team won second place in the 2022 CME Global University Trading Challenge.

The winning team included Gopal Karki (Captain), Javkhant-Od Batsaikhan, Adejoke Ifafesobi, and Nasirul Haque. “The competition allowed us to assess the skills and knowledge we learned at UB and proved what me and my teammates are capable of,” said Karki. “It gave us a platform to use our knowledge from our academic journey in the real market.”

and risk management, and how their prices are determined. They appear to have learned a lot. “I am very proud of the winning team’s success,” said Director of the Ernest C. Trefz School of Business, Timothy Raynor. “Equally important is that all of Professor Wu’s teams had a practical real-life learning experience.”

**President Wilken and Provost Im congratulate the winning team at Waldemere Hall**

Along with experiencing the ins and outs of derivative trading, the students learned the importance of teamwork.

“For the 29 days of the contest, we had each other’s backs, writing reports and doing research,” said Karki. “Whenever you feel like you are losing money or hope, it’s good to have a team to back you up.”

Each team member received a cash prize of \$1500 and all but Haque were able to fly to Chicago on Sunday, December 4, 2022, to attend the awards ceremony and Market Education Day. Karki, Batsaikhan, and Ifafesobi met the first-place team from Universidad Anahuac in Mexico, who pulled ahead of the UB students in the final week, as well as other participants and financial professionals from around the world.

“It was a great avenue for networking,” said Adejoke Ifafesobi. “The event bridged the gap between students and the top people in the industry.” Originally from Nigeria, Ifafesobi plans to stay in the U.S. after graduating with a dual Finance and Analytics and Systems major. “The competition taught me that I can combine skills from both majors together to succeed,” she said. “It’s a big industry.”

All the team members are scheduled to graduate in May 2023. Karki plans to return to Nepal and start an investment group that bridges the gap between finance and agriculture that he sees in his home country. For now, though, he is enjoying the victory. “This was a great opportunity to advertise UB,” said Karki. “We put our university’s name out there with NYU and MIT. It was an honor to put our University’s name on the leaderboard for the entire month.” ■



This global trading competition is sponsored by CME, the world’s leading derivatives marketplace, and involves students from universities all over the world. This year, 491 teams from 208 schools representing 23 countries were registered, including those from elite institutions such as MIT, University of Chicago, Carnegie Mellon, and NYU.

The winning UB team was one of several from Professor Consheng Wu’s course on Financial Derivatives and Risk Management (FIN 545). “I decided to incorporate the CME competition into the curriculum because it offers students a unique opportunity to learn and experience the excitement and decision-making of real-time trading of derivatives,” said Professor Wu. “It is a perfect opportunity to combine theory with practice.”

Throughout the semester students learn how these derivatives work, how they can be used for speculation



# New Advising Rooms Dedicated at the Heckman Center

On January 24, 2023, University of Bridgeport dedicated ten new advising rooms in the Heckman Center. After opening in 2020, the 20,000 square foot Heckman Center has become the hub of the UB campus, building student success through academic advising and career preparation. “Students get to practice important skills here, including practicing self-advocacy and asking for help when needed,” says President Danielle Wilken. “This is not just preparation for school, it is for being human beings in the world.”

Built with a \$250,000 gift from Susan Heckman O’Hara, ’84, and Thomas O’Hara, UB alumni, trustees and Fairfield residents, the Center now features new advising rooms thanks to further donations from Susan, Patricia Williamson Heckman, ’81, Lynn Heckman Ramirez, ’83, and Joanne Joy Heckman. “The Heckman Center makes me want to come back to UB,” says Susan. “I met so many wonderful young adults here who love this space. I hope it can be a model for other universities in the future.” ■

**Joanne Joy Heckman, Susan Heckman O’Hara, and Patricia Williamson Heckman**



# Music Department Moves to John J. Cox Student Center



UB’s Music department has moved from its longtime home in the Arnold Bernhard Arts & Humanities Center to a new space in the John C. Cox Student Center.

The new location places the Music department in the heart of daily student life. “I am excited about our new spacious classrooms and proximity to the rest of campus,” said department chair Dr. Mya Scarlato. The flexible space provided by the Student Center classrooms will allow for the department to maintain all of its performing ensembles’ rehearsal space, while having the flexibility to have general seminars, discussion, and lectures as well. ■

**Music students perform in the Student Center Social Room**



## UB Serves the Complete Student with Knight's Pantry

With the help of the community, UB has established the Knight's Pantry to help students with their food and health needs.

The Thomas Merton Center of Bridgeport reached out in Spring 2021 and asked if any students needed food due to growing food insecurity during the pandemic. In response, Assistant Dean of Students Kelli Meyer and Director of Civic Engagement Melanie Strout established Knight's Pantry that fall. The Merton Center and UB had worked closely before - through our supply of student interns for their many community programs. Another partner, the Bridgeport Rescue Mission, quickly jumped on board as well.

"Everyone here at UB wants to help," said Melanie Strout, who currently runs the Pantry. "This is just another one of UB's many services to our students."

The idea quickly spread, with members of the UB community and alums donating food, money, and time. Stop & Shop's School Food

Pantry Program donated \$5000 worth of gift cards to use for food staples as well as health and beauty items from their shelves. UB received \$19,800 from CT Foodshare as grant funds to upgrade a new pantry space with new shelving, refrigerator and freezer, and \$10,000 from Susan Heckman towards food and personal hygiene products in the pantry. Interns from the Human Services major helped by packing the bags and managing the open shopping hours during spring semester.

Currently on the 2nd floor of the Wahlstrom Library in the Heckman Center, the Pantry offers non-perishable food items and personal hygiene products. Students can place requests online and pick-up at their selections at their convenience, or shop in person on select days of the week.

"UB is making it possible for many students to access an education," Strout continued. "Attaining those educational goals sometimes requires more than academic support." ■

# UB Awarded Grant to Develop Cybersecurity Program

On August 29, 2022, Governor Ned Lamont and corporate leaders and strategic partners from across the state joined together in Stamford to announce Tech Talent Accelerator \$1 million worth of grants to 7 public and private institutions, including University of Bridgeport. Sponsored by the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE) and the Business-Higher Education Forum (BHEF), in partnership with the Connecticut Office of Workforce Strategy and the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, these grants will help companies build tech talent in high-skill jobs, as well as create new routes from community colleges into industry aligned B.A. programs like the ones at UB.

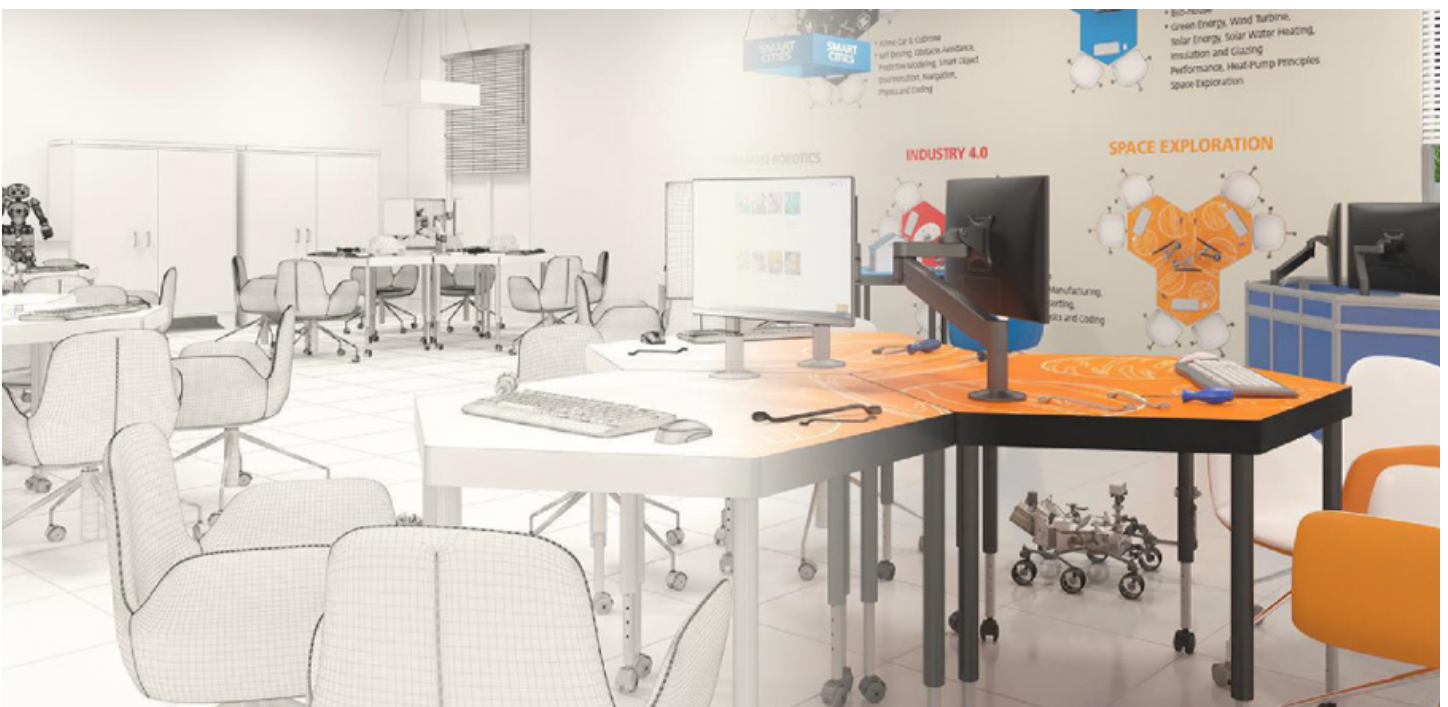
The money will help UB's School of Engineering launch a new 12-week course in cybersecurity and information security designed specifically for businesses in Southwest Connecticut's finance and tech sectors. The class will teach students to analyze security models, perform risk assessments, secure systems development,

manage crises, and comply with legal and regulatory requirements. The end goal is an interdisciplinary Cyber Security certificate that will align with technology-enabled jobs in the cybersecurity field and allow our students to be workforce ready.

Dr. Khaled Elleithy, Dean of the College of Engineering, Business, and Education will be responsible for overseeing the course development and implementation of the program at UB, supported by faculty and staff/graduate student to teach the curricula and manage the logistical aspects of providing the courses.

"Graduates of this program will be workforce ready as IT cyber security professionals," said Dr. Elleithy. "They may also pursue work as a security researcher, forensic analyst or security architect or continue their graduate studies. Students of the program will have access to a number of resources including UB's Center for Career Development, a comprehensive career counseling and resource center, that connects students to career opportunities and strategic employer partners." ■

Below: The design for UB's new IET labs



# Gymnastics Captains Learn To Be Leaders

Leadership is a skill that comes from hard-won experience. And University of Bridgeport gymnastics captains Alexis Richardson and Jordan Streete have earned that skill more than most.

Originally from Coram, New York on Long Island, Alexis Richardson has been a member of the UB team for six years. While pursuing a degree in Psychology and Human Services during her first two years of undergraduate school, she suffered several injuries and went through knee surgery. As well as competing in vault and floor exercises and captaining the team, she also joined both the UB lacrosse team

and the cross-country team, attending meets and matches when they don't interfere with the gymnastics season. She does a lot of homework on the bus, to say the least. "I am able to manage it and keep my grades up high," she says. "If I put my mind to something, I'll do it."

"Alexis truly captures what it means to us to be a UB gymnast," says gymnastics coach Lorraine Galow. "She wants the best for each of her teammates."

Hailing from Agawam, Massachusetts, co-captain Jordan Streete is a 5-year member of the UB team, performing on vault and beam. She entered as a freshman while recovering

The 2022-2023 UB  
Gymnastics Team



“Our biggest role as captains is that we’ve been through it. We’re just trying to share our experiences with these young athletes.”



from an Achilles tendon tear and last year, during the first week of what was supposed to be her final season, she tore her other Achilles. She spent the year completing extensive rehab and getting stronger, making the choice to return to the sport for her final season this year. “When I was a freshman, I never would have thought of being captain,” says Streete. “Alexis has been a leader to me since she was a year above me.”

“Jordan is one of the hardest workers and most determined athletes I have had the pleasure of coaching,” continues Galow. “She’s amazing.”

### **Pandemic and recovery**

Both Jordan and Alexis credit their injuries with teaching them how to manage larger problems, like the outbreak of Covid-19. “The pandemic arrived during the peak of my gymnastic career,” says Streete. “And when the season was cancelled, I was content with this being it.” But then, when UB announced that it was bringing back sports, she immediately thought of Coach Galow. “If Lorraine’s coming back, I’m coming back,” she told herself. “So, when she got the job, I trained all summer long.” Unfortunately, shortly after this return, Jordan tore her second Achilles, taking a year to recover before competing this year at 100%.

Alexis had torn her meniscus during her sophomore year at UB, missing almost two seasons. Just as she got back onto the floor her junior year, the pandemic hit. “When we found out we were getting sent home because of Covid, we were sitting in the locker room talking about how we might not go to UCLA because of Covid, and we got the email saying we needed to leave school entirely,” says Richardson. “It all happened so fast. But no matter what, I knew I was going to take my 5th year and compete, because I felt like I

never accomplished what I wanted to in college gymnastics.” Now, Alexis is in her 2nd year of graduate school and 6th year of gymnastics. “I feel like I’m finally getting the ending that I want to my career,” she says happily.

### **A new style of coaching**

As five-time USAG National Team Champion, Lorraine Galow was already a legend at University of Bridgeport. Now, in just two years as head coach, Galow’s impact has been incredible. The team quickly went from only 12 members last year to 22 this year. “For all five returners from the previous year, Lorraine was the deciding factor,” says Richardson. “That was the best news of the entire year.”

Teaching emotional maturity is not something that most people think of when they think of sports, or college classes for that matter. But Coach Galow has taught Alexis, Jordan, and the rest of her students to listen to their bodies and their minds. She factors in their mental health, always asking how they are doing. They are allowed to take three personal days from practice, no questions asked, unless they want to talk about it with her. “She’s always there for us,” says Streete. “Lorraine is huge on safety.” Galow also lets them modify their routines if their bodies are feeling off, letting them make their own decisions about what is right for their own bodies.

“The great thing about Lorraine is that she doesn’t put a lot of pressure on winning championships but more on building us into well-rounded people,” says Streete.

### **Co-Captains**

There is a moment where you realize you can be a leader, in charge of your own future, and the future of others. That moment came when Alexis and Jordan were asked to be team captains. “When I was injured I had a different role, and

# Side Lines

so I transitioned into captain from that,” says Streete. “We have different strengths, but we understand how much it takes to get where you want to be, to push through pain and injury.”

“Our biggest role as captains is that we’ve been through it,” agrees Richardson. “We’re just trying to share our experiences with these young athletes. I’m 23, Jordan is 22. They call us ‘grandma.’ And in a way, that’s true. We’re trying to teach them as much as we can before we are gone.”

Some of that comes in the form of passing on Galow’s teachings about empathy to other athletes who are injured, or who are struggling with the intense nature of college sports. “We tell them that it is going to be okay,” they both say. “You have to give them tough love, support each other, give them pep talks, and push them to succeed.”

## Putting it all together

Meanwhile, a second graduation nears for both Alexis and Jordan. Previously, Alexis earned her undergraduate degree in Psychology & Human Services and is now getting her master’s degree in secondary education to become a math teacher. Jordan graduates with a master’s in Business Administration this May. And yet, despite a busy schedule of schoolwork and sports, they find time for other work.

Alexis coaches students who range from first grade to high school at the Gymnastics and Cheerleading Academy in Fairfield, while preparing to be a teacher. “I’m going to be teaching math, and a lot of kids don’t like math,” she laughs. “I’m going to impart confidence and positivity in my classes. Positive self-talk has gotten me through so much. Stop



**Above: Alexis Richardson makes a perfect landing while Coach Galow celebrates**  
**Below: Jordan Streete balances athletics and work**

saying the words ‘I can’t.’ It will change your whole mindset.”

Jordan also coached during the pandemic but had to stop when her Achilles tendon tore. But she took an internship in summer 2022 that has helped her secure a full-time job in the auditing department of Deloitte when she graduates in May. The opportunity to work on different leadership opportunities in the gym will certainly translate to her upcoming work at Deloitte. “Once you are physically skilled, gymnastics is 100% mental,” she says. “In a corporate setting, I might get nervous, and so I imagine I am in competition, and take a few deep breaths. I know that I will do my best, and if I mess up, I will have my team behind me.”

## A well-rounded education

Both credit University of Bridgeport with giving them the skills to navigate that future, from their incredible coach to the stellar education they got from world-class professors. “I was really happy with my decision to come here,” says Streete. “Particularly the one-on-one classroom attention that you get.” “It’s a small school; everyone knows everyone,” agrees Richardson. “And everyone is close. We are such a strong community.”

With a solid foundation of expert knowledge, emotional awareness, and relentless work ethic, Richardson and Streete can look forward to success far beyond UB. They have proven to be leaders in the gym, and now they will have the chance to demonstrate those skills to the rest of us. “I have no doubt they will,” says Galow. “They are well-prepared to be captains wherever they go.” ■





## Track and Field Races Toward the Future

Six brand new teams at University of Bridgeport are running, throwing, and leaping into the future. Eager students have joined the men's and women's cross country, indoor track and field, and outdoor track and field teams, all led by head coach Gregg Schmidt.

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

Schmidt worked most recently at Post University in Waterbury, Connecticut, and at several other colleges in the Northeast and Midwest. He has worked with all-conference, all-region, and All-American students in many events, from heptathlon to hammer throw, as well as solo coaching three national champions. Working with regional and national qualifiers has led him to what he believes is an even

more exciting role: starting a program from the ground up. "I feel privileged to be the only first coach the university will have," says Schmidt. "And I love coaching Division II because I get to bring in high end, experienced athletes, but also athletes that I get to bring up and help to improve."

Transfer student Luke Downes is one of the few upperclassmen on the teams. He joined the team to throw javelin, but also competes in other events when eligible. "Being on a brand new team is nothing like being on a 20-year-old track team," says Downes. "We have to deal with many more issues, like not being able to pick our events. It feels both overwhelming and underwhelming."

"I give my athletes a lot of credit for taking a chance on a program that is building from scratch," says Schmidt. He is in the process of recruiting more athletes. "All the time, every day," he says, laughing. But, he says, we're lucky to have the teams already here, many of them the same students for three seasons, some as crossovers from other UB sports. "We have pole vaulters, throwers, jumpers, sprinters, and

**UB's Cross Country  
Team makes its debut**

# Side Lines



**Left: Gregg Schmidt coaches Larisa Weber**  
**Above: Janae Scott throws the discus**  
**Below: Brandon Adams on high jump**

a fantastic job,” says Kruk. “It feels great to be part of history here at UB.” He credits Schmidt’s focus on technique with

distance runners. I said that if we’re going to be a track and field team, we’re going to start from day one.”

Janae Scott got one of those recruiting calls from Schmidt and loved the university’s location on the water. She now competes as a thrower, jumper, and hurdler. Unlike some of the athletes who are competing for the first time, she has been throwing shot puts since 7th grade, soon after adding discus, hurdles, and triple jump. At UB she has tried the hammer throw, as well. She does all this while serving in the Army reserves, attending the monthly drills. “If a meet falls upon the drill date, then priority takes over and I miss the meet,” she says. “Usually, though, the two don’t collide.”

For now, the teams are using a track at Bethel High School to practice and competing on the road at away venues. “Everyone understands that to solidify our track and field team we’ll need our own home eventually,” says Schmidt. “I’m appreciative that Bridgeport saw the benefit of sports while some other schools are mistakenly cutting them. People I meet outside of the university are excited that we are starting up a track team again.”

Maxim Kruk is a thrower from New York who graduated high school early, turning 17 this year. He chose UB because of its high-achieving academic programs like dental hygiene and chiropractic. But he also wanted to be part of something new on the track team. “For a first-year team with a limited number of athletes, we have done

the quick success of the program. “I chose to be a thrower because it is a very explosive event just like all track events, but it is appealing to me because of how technical it is. Track and Field is one of those sports that you need to train to be good, you cannot show up and win; you can tell who works on their craft and who does not.”

Already, the hard work and focus is paying off. During the autumn Cross-Country season, the men’s and women’s teams competed at the Ted Owen Invitational at CCSU, at the Bruce Kirsh Invitational and Franklin Pierce University, and at the last regular season match at the Adelphi Short Course Meet, Alexandra Toth achieved a personal best time at 21:08.20, while freshman Emily Chase was selected as the Central Atlantic Collegiate Conference Women’s Cross-





Country Rookie of the Week. In fact, every UB athlete scored a personal or season best at this meet, rounding out a promising first season.

**Luke Downes takes First Place In 400m Race At William Sutherland Invitational**

In December, the Indoor Track and Field Teams debuted at the Elm City Invitational, with Brandon Adams winning the men's high jump and Alexandra Toth winning the women's mile. In January, Cristian Ellis took two first place finishes in long jump at the I-95/91 Challenge at SCSU, with other students like Maxim Kruk, Faith Herschberger, and Emilia Russell placing. Shortly afterward, they returned to the SCSU fieldhouse for the William Sutherland Invitational, where Luke Downes took first place in the 400m race. At the 30-team Bucknell University Bison Open Meet in Lewisburg, PA, Emilia Russell took fifth place in the orange division of the pentathlon, third place in the long jump, fourth place in the high jump, fifth place in the 800m run, and first place in the shot put. Alexandra Toth put up a time of 3:33.79 in the women's 1000m, finishing seventh, while Luke Downes took fourth place in the 500m race with 1:12.72.

Originally from Austria, Larissa Weber is only a meter from the national qualifying mark with her javelin. She also ran for the cross-country team and competed in the heptathlon. "I have never done heptathlon before; my main discipline is javelin," says Weber. "In Austria I mostly focused on that and hadn't the chance to experience the other events. Now I finally have the chance to enjoy them." However, she looks



forward to next year, with more recruits and resources. "I had never been to America before," she reflects. "It was probably the American dream to go to college in the U.S."

Coach Schmidt has a big job ahead of him, as he tries to balance the needs of the team with the needs of the individual athletes. "Some coaches try to rush the athletes, but my philosophy is when you're ready, you're ready," he says. "I take the responsibility very seriously. I've had a lot of success with individual teams and athletes, but this is the opportunity to build an entire program from the ground up."

In future years, he hopes that UB's athletes qualify for the NCAA meets. "The university could be known for track and field and cross country. There's a lot of potential here to start something special," says Schmidt. "Each year we will get better until we are an established program." ■

## Lacrosse Takes the Field at UB



Spring 2023 saw men's lacrosse joining the women's team in NCAA Division II competition. With Jessica Ormrod coaching the women's program and Stephen Tempone leading the men's, the two teams traveled all over the east coast to compete.

"If it wasn't for lacrosse, I wouldn't be able to live my dream of studying in the USA," said Tereza Kreuzova of the Czech Republic. "I emailed many schools and visited a few but UB won my heart. I loved the location on the water, the campus, and the community."

It was a tough season for these new Purple Knights, but the men's lacrosse team made history on a chilly Wednesday afternoon in Springfield, Massachusetts, when in their very first match they defeated the American International College Yellow Jackets 9 to 8. The women's lacrosse team also won their first match against St. Thomas Aquinas in Sparkill, New York, 14 to 4. ■

Hello Fellow UB Alumni,

It is a real privilege to be able to address all of you once again in *Knightlines*. This year has been filled with renewed energy and excitement for UB both today and into the future. There have been improvements in program offerings at UB and our faculty is noteworthy for their extensive “real life” experience. Events such as UB RISE (Research, Innovation, Scholarship, and Entrepreneurship) provide insight to the scope and character of UB. I was able to participate in the 2023 UB RISE and had the chance to see firsthand the quality of these programs, of UB students and faculty, and the engagement with business, local, and statewide communities.

While there have been changes to some programs, those UB alumni and the careers they have pursued remain points of University of Bridgeport pride and their legacies are essential to our Alumni Association. Additionally, as the university continues to move forward and embrace the challenges of future student needs, new areas are emerging, including the Manufacturing Center being developed in Mandeville Hall and the UB Innovation Center housed in Bauer Hall.

Come by the Alumni Center at Bates Hall and meet the Advancement Team who will be happy to acquaint you with the many changes and improvements occurring on campus. They can also share the exciting calendar of upcoming events in place to build on UB involvement with all our alumni. One to place in your calendar now is “Knights Fest,” our homecoming event scheduled for October 27 and 28. Watch the UB website for updates.

If you have been away from the university for a while, as so many of us were, now is a great time to reconnect. To start, make sure your contact information is still current by updating it on the alumni page of the University of Bridgeport website. The next way is get engaged. Join in a local event, sponsor an internship or event, or share your skills and experience through volunteering or mentorship opportunities. There are many opportunities to work with the UB team to keep up the momentum through collaboration and contributions.

Your participation as Alumni is a vital component of UB success and a reinvigorated UB looks forward to your engagement as a lifetime member of the University of Bridgeport Alumni Association.

Sincerely,

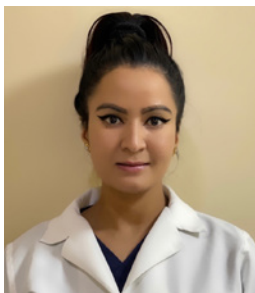
Bill Moran '74  
President, University of Bridgeport Alumni Association

# Alumni Notes

Teacher, guitarist, and Music Education alum **Tyler Suarez** ('20,'22) released his first full-length record, *Plutonomy*, in Fall 2022. Tyler found inspiration for his two passions – teaching and creating music – at UB, saying, “Getting to instill kindness and compassion through music is a blessing. UB showed me the importance of finding yourself and finding a truer version of yourself by embracing others and their differences.”

Computer Science and Engineering doctoral graduate **Ajay D. Shrestha** ('02,'06,'19) reports that after earning all three of his degrees at UB and working as an engineer at a healthcare software startup company based in downtown Bridgeport, he is leading and managing a global IT organization of 15 team members. He remains involved in UB’s alumni board, and works part-time as an adjunct faculty in the school of engineering. “UB has not only given me three degrees but also instilled in me a habit for lifelong learning and ability to adapt,” says Shrestha. “When we give back, it only makes ourselves and the UB community stronger.”

University of Bridgeport’s first MS in Analytics and Systems student and first graduate from the program, **Fahad Mahbub**, ('18) was promoted to Assistant Vice President and Product Manager at Elavon, Inc., a division of U.S. Bank.



Doctor of Chiropractic student **Yojana Shahi** ('15) has become the first licensed chiropractor in Nepal. After graduating from UB in 2015, Dr. Shahi worked in Connecticut for 7 years, building the skills to treat acute and chronic pain patients with neuromusculoskeletal disorders. “UB prepared me to be a competent

Chiropractic physician,” says Dr. Shahi. “Truly, UB was an opportunity of a lifetime.”



**Wilfredo Medina** ('07) attended UB for a degree in Human Services and Psychology and pitched for the baseball team. “I was number 37,” writes Medina. “Now I am 37, and currently hold the position of Supervisor with the State of Connecticut Department of Social Services. The discipline from being a student athlete taught hard

work, teamwork, organization, and accountability.”

Mechanical engineering graduate **Aseem Gupta** ('07) was recently named in Building Design and Construction Magazine as one of their 40 under 40 for his work designing Pharmaceutical spaces at Genesis in Carlsbad, California. “My master’s at UB helped me uplift my career and made me find the right Engineering opportunities for me,” says Gupta. “Which has eventually brought me to this level.”

**Dr. Carol Birks** ('04) reports that she was named Superintendent of the Allentown School District in Pennsylvania. “I am thrilled to be named the Superintendent of this amazing and culturally diverse community,” writes Birks. “I look forward to continuing to partner with staff, students, families, and the School Board of Directors to create the conditions where everyone feels safe, valued, empowered, and loved.”

Bridgeport native **David Ekstrom** ('61) was recently inducted into the National Croquet Hall of Fame. He and his wife, Martha ('61) also recently celebrated their 61st wedding anniversary. ■

## Remembering...

**Robin Midha** ('19) passed away in Stamford on February 6th, 2023. She worked in the School of Professional Studies as a GA for two years before serving as a manager for Pitney Bowes in Stamford until her death.

**Renee Boyd** ('09) recently passed away in Stamford, CT at the age of 69. She was an artist and business professional with multiple degrees and “light, charm, wit, and warm presence” that were a beacon for her family and friends.

**Paul Allan Smith** ('78) of Shelton, Connecticut passed away on March 1st, 2023. He received his bachelor’s in business management from UB, served his country as a proud veteran of the US Army, and led a successful career as Vice President of Banking until his retirement. He had a passion for gardening and for restoring antiques, stained glass windows, and steamer trunks.

**Golden Knight Dave Beaty** ('73) of Stratford, Connecticut passed away on May 6, 2023. He had recently returned to campus in November 2022 with his friend Fred Burgerhoff ('72) to enjoy the UB Alumni basketball game. ■

## Dan Abrams Becomes an Alum After 55 Years

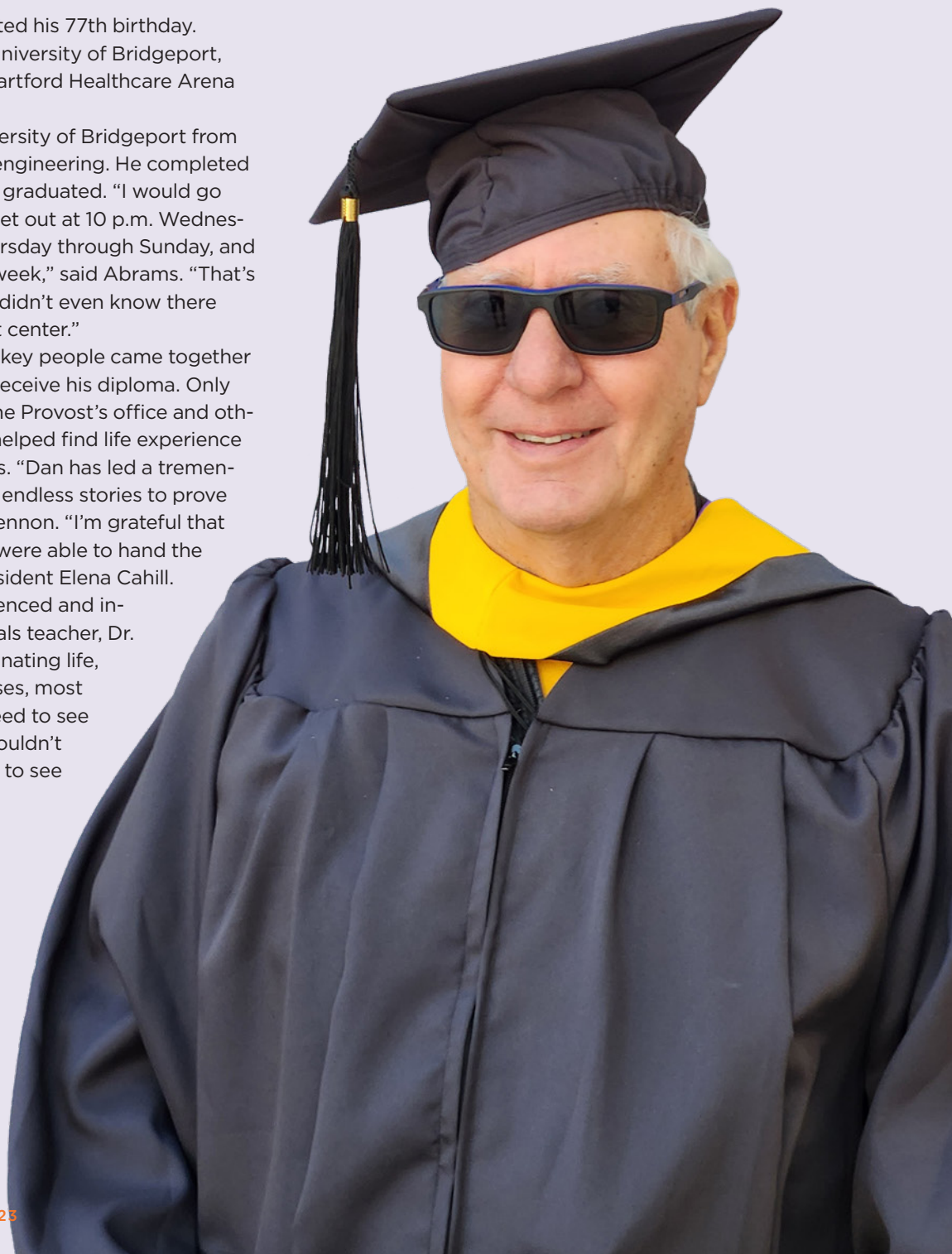
On May 5th, Dan Abrams celebrated his 77th birthday. On May 6th, he graduated from University of Bridgeport, walking across the stage at the Hartford Healthcare Arena in front of his family.

Abrams was a student at University of Bridgeport from 1963-1968, studying mechanical engineering. He completed 152 credits, but he never officially graduated. "I would go full-time to school Monday at 6, get out at 10 p.m. Wednesday, go back to Boston, work Thursday through Sunday, and then do it all again the following week," said Abrams. "That's an odd life to live. For five years I didn't even know there was a bowling alley in the student center."

During Summer 2022, several key people came together to make sure Dan Abrams could receive his diploma. Only three credits shy of graduating, the Provost's office and other officials evaluated his file and helped find life experience to substitute for classroom credits. "Dan has led a tremendously successful life and has the endless stories to prove it," said Dean of Students Craig Lennon. "I'm grateful that he crossed the finish line and we were able to hand the diploma to him," agreed Vice President Elena Cahill.

Abrams said that he was influenced and inspired by his Strength and Materials teacher, Dr. Berry. Over the course of his fascinating life, he worked in 18 different businesses, most of them in mechanical fields. "I need to see things, touch things," he said. "I couldn't wait to go to work every Monday, to see what I could invent or improve."

"One thing I learned is that engineering is engineering, math is math, physics is physics, I don't care if you go to MIT or Harvard," he continued. "The education I got was as good as any college in the world." ■



# Into the Great Design

Longtime Interior Design Professor John A. Kandalajt, age 81, of Stratford, beloved husband of Hiyam S. Kandalajt, passed away peacefully in his home on November 28, 2022. He was born in Cairo, Egypt on September 27, 1941, studied at L'Ecole des Beaux Arts de Rouen and received his master's in architecture from the University of Montreal. He started teaching at UB on January 22, 2001, and continued with the school, first as Professor and subsequently as Chair of the Interior Design Department, until his retirement on May 15, 2014. ■



## Living History

“The end of all our exploring, will be to arrive where we started, and know the place for the first time.” – T.S. Eliot, quoted by Thomas Juliusburger

Former Professor Thomas Juliusburger passed away on Wednesday, April 12, 2023, fully lucid and in good spirits until the end. Born in Germany in 1931, he resettled in England, where he attended Oxford University and studied under eminent historian Hugh Trevor-Roper. He began a full-time career at University of Bridgeport in 1966, teaching History for 55 years prior to his retirement in 2021. He was an avid sailor and traveler, and rigorously tried to improve the quality of UB's instruction, a pastime shared with his friend George Blake. A quote in his commonplace book attributed to Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1070-1089, was noted by his wife Machiko as significant: “The adornment of a teacher is the honest life of his pupils.” We have only to look at the generations of students he inspired to find a wealth of such honors. ■

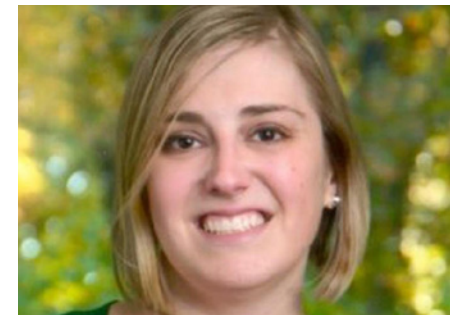
## Honoring Lauren Rousseau 10 Years After the Tragedy at Sandy Hook

On December 14, 2012, Lauren Gabrielle Rousseau, a 30-year-old teacher at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, was one of the 26 individuals who lost their lives in an unspeakable tragedy.

Lauren was a 2005 graduate from University of Bridgeport's School of Education whose lifelong goal was to be a teacher. She had a deep passion for the education of children and a deep-rooted devotion to the teaching profession. Her work-ethic and dedication to her students exemplify the very best of UB.

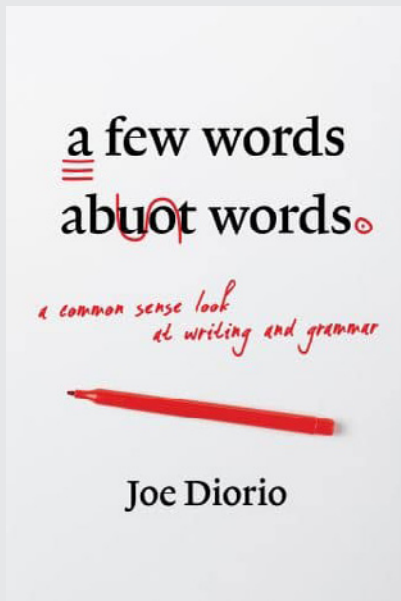
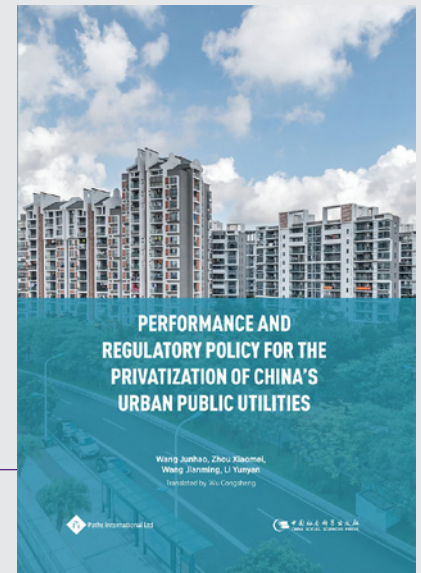
The Lauren Rousseau Elementary Education Memorial Scholarship was established to honor Lauren's memory by supporting individuals sharing a similar passionate for education. Any student enrolled in the School of Education is eligible for the \$1000 award by nomination of a faculty member. The application is reviewed by a committee made up of School of Education Faculty and an alumnus who initiated this memorial.

“The Lauren Rousseau Memorial Scholarship helped me achieve my dream of becoming a teacher,” said awardee Fatme Ayoub. “I was able to meet the parents of Lauren Rousseau, and in meeting her parents I realized the full impact of making sure that her memory stays alive through other educators and my students. She was truly a beautiful soul and she is missed, but through this beautiful program her memory stays alive.” ■



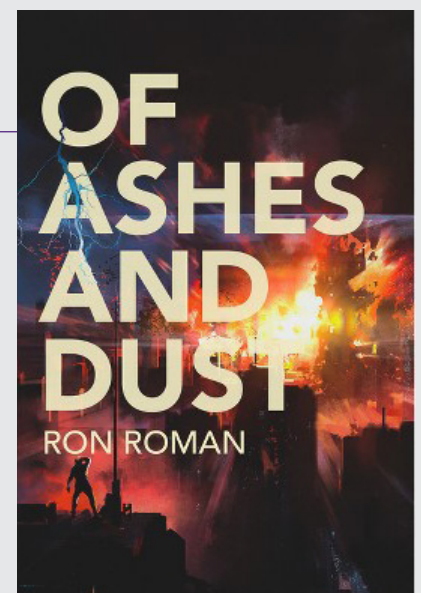
# Book Lines

University of Bridgeport Professor of Finance Congsheng Wu has completed the translation of *Performance and Regulatory Policy for the Privatization of China's Urban Public Utilities*. Published jointly by Paths International Ltd (UK) and China Social Sciences Press (China), the volume was written by Wang Junhao, Zhou Xiaomei, Wang Jianming, and Li Yunyan. Professor Wu's translation began in 2017 and he has already started on his next project, a translation of *Forty Years of Chinese Economics: 1978-2018*. "But I hope it won't take that long," joked Professor Wu.



Mass Communication alum Joseph Diorio's ('78) *A Few Words About Words: A common-sense look at writing and grammar* has won several awards, including an honorary "Oscar" from Beaufort Books, notable title in Shelf Unbound 2021 Indie Best Awards, bronze medal from Foreword INDIES, and a Music City Gold Pen award from the Nashville chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators. "Writing is a pure communication skill, so it is an honor to receive this recognition," said Diorio. "The basis of any social media post, TikTok video, or any other communication is good writing."

Ron Roman, ('73), has released his thriller *Of Ashes and Dust* through Addison & Highsmith Publishers, an imprint of Histria Books dedicated to outstanding original works of fiction. This no-punches-pulled apocalyptic tale of mesmerizing intrigue and gut-retching survival is told as an alternate-history thriller during the last days of a global Armageddon, culminating in an unexpected and explosive ending. *Publisher's Weekly* raves, "Distinguished by sparkling prose and an immersive narrative style, Roman's story of liberty and revolution offers readers more than a vision of an American dystopia and a terrifying global conflict, reflecting the faultiness of real-world politics."





# MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER



# UB ANNUAL REPORT

Dear Friends:

As an alum, professor, director, and now Vice President of Innovation, Strategy, and Advancement, I have been a part of the University of Bridgeport community for decades. I am proud of both our rich history and our recent achievements, a few of which you will find in the pages of this magazine.

The University of Bridgeport's Office of Advancement is built upon the belief that great institutions are established by great communities. Our team of devoted advocates strives to cultivate a broad base of support for UB among alumni, students, parents, and friends of the university. Together, we move the institution forward through the creation of transformative programs and partnerships. These initiatives provide essential resources for new construction projects, student scholarships, faculty retention, faculty recruitment, and innovative programs that guide students from education to career.

We are happy to be able to include a giving opportunity in this year's *Knightlines*, with both QR code and envelope for your convenience. The university exists thanks to your belief and dedication, and we need your support now more than ever. As we move forward toward the Centennial in 2027, all of us who care about the future of education are coming together again to lift UB.

I am honored and thankful to be a lifelong partner of this amazing institution and for the students, alums, and donors who help make it all possible.

With thanks,

Elena Cahill, JD '88, '91  
Vice President of Innovation, Strategy, and Advancement

## WAYS TO GIVE

### GIFTS OF CASH

Gifts of cash may be made with a personal or cashier's check, or by credit card.

### ONLINE

To give online visit  
[www.bridgeport.edu/support-ub](http://www.bridgeport.edu/support-ub)

### MAIL OR PHONE

To give by mail, our address is Office of Advancement, 126 Park Avenue, Bates Hall, Bridgeport, CT 06604. To give by phone, call 203.576.2433. Gifts can be made by check or credit card (MasterCard, Visa, American Express). Please make checks payable to University of Bridgeport.

### STOCKS AND BONDS

A donation of stock by an electronic stock transfer or by gifting the stock certificate form to UB. Contact the Office of Annual Giving for instructions at 203.576.2433.

### REAL ESTATE

If you own property that is not subject to a mortgage and has appreciated in value, a gift of real estate to the University may be an attractive option.

### YOUR WILL

You may also make a deferred gift by naming the University in your Will. If you plan to do this, please notify us of your intentions.

### GIFTS OF LIFE INSURANCE

Make a substantial gift with modest premium payments. This is also a good use of paid policies no longer needed for family members.







# 2022–2023 Annual Report

So far in 2023, the Office of Advancement has hosted **more than 1,000 participants**, including students, alumni, friends, family, and colleagues at events both local and national.

The office is proud to have **increased its overall revenue by 33% - more than \$500,000** – from fiscal year 2022 to fiscal year 2023 for a **total revenue of \$1,562,953!**



## By the Numbers:



**\$83,601**  
Alumni Giving



**\$2,352,380**  
Financial Giving



**\$123,051**  
Annual Giving



**800**  
Total Donors

## 2022–23 Snapshot:

**1,110** Degrees Conferred

**3,988** Total Enrollment

**73%** Students of Color

**34%** First-Generation Students

**1,298** New Students

**136** Full-Time Faculty Members

**16** NCAA Division II Varsity Athletics Teams

**60+** Clubs and Organizations

## Class of '74

Top class donor  
in fiscal year 2023

Classes of '77 and '81  
were tied for second

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Cindy Taylor  
Imani Telesford  
Allen P. Tepper  
Brenda Terry  
Bobbi J. Thatcher  
The Kennedy Collective  
Brian Thomas  
Brian Thompkins  
Nadiya Thompkins  
Mitchell Thornton  
Anissa Timothy-Caesar

Jennifer Tippel  
Allyson Tolliver  
Tomasso Group, Tomasso  
Brothers Inc.  
Lorraine Tomberg  
Joseph A. Tonelli, Jr.  
Brianna Torres  
Donald Traill  
Johnnette Traill  
Vinnette Traill  
Elizabeth Traill  
Diane E. Tryhane  
Medeya Tsnobiladze, N.D.  
Rose M. Tucker  
Patricia Tupinio  
Elvia Turrentine  
Janis M. Umschlag  
United Way Greater  
Twin Cities  
Karen Upchurch  
Bonaventura Valerio  
Rose Valerio  
Tommy Valuckas  
Pamela Vanbuskirk  
Rosalie C. Vaneck  
Manuel J. Vaz  
Joseph Vega  
Esther Vegesina  
Xinia Velasquez  
Syam Veluvolu  
Nicole Vento  
Jane A. Viles  
Angela Viles  
Bradley Viles  
Kathryn Viles  
Henry S. Villegas  
Ruth Voigt  
Alicia Vulchev  
Ann J. Waldemar  
Julie Wandtke  
Jessica Washington  
Gloria M. Wayo  
Joseph Wayo  
Joan Weaver  
Krystofir Weaver  
Melissa Webb  
Michelle Weingardt  
Todd M. Welch  
John A. Wheatland, Ed.D.  
Kevin Whelan  
Leo Whelan  
Denise M. Whelan  
Matthew Whelan  
Christine White  
Barbara J. Wiggins  
Barbara Wild  
David Wild  
Perry Williams-Jeffries  
Renee Williams-Maynard  
Toni Williamson  
Luther Wilson  
Devyn Winner  
Howard B. Wise  
Monique Witt  
Deborah Wittschke  
Daniel Wolf  
Melissa Wolfe  
Stephen Woods  
Roberta Woods  
Jordan Yarett  
Joseph Young  
Adeeb Yousef  
Barbara Zappavigna  
Sandy Zarate  
Mary E. Zeedyk  
Ellen P. Zeigler  
Gary W. Zielinski, Ph.D.  
Marie Zito  
Dino D. Zotto  
Barry J. Zuckerman



# *Save the Date!*

The University of Bridgeport's

# Knights Fest



**Friday, October 27 and  
Saturday, October 28, 2023**

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

**Friday:**  
Community Day  
Pep Rally  
Women's Soccer  
Awards Gala

**Saturday:**  
Homecoming  
Men's Soccer  
Student Formal

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