



IN FOCUS

December 2023, Vol. 13, No. 12

Searching for sunken treasures



Underwater archaeologists search the ocean floor for shipwrecks, ancient civilizations, and more

CONTENTS

Feature Stories

- New program aids “stopped out” students p.2
- Conservation alumna works in Alaska forest p.4
- UWM alums are underwater archaeologists p.6
- C21 researches food security with storytelling p.10
- UWM, MCW debut accelerated PharmD degree p.12
- Geography student spots rare bug p.13
- Geosciences celebrates 60 years p.14

Columns

- Upcoming Events p.15
- Laurels and Accolades p.15
- In the Media p.16
- Video Stories p.16
- Alumni Accomplishments p.17

PUBLISHED THE FIRST TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH BY THE
COLLEGE OF LETTERS AND SCIENCE AT
THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MILWAUKEE.

CONTACT US AT LET-SCI@UWM.EDU

L&S DEAN: SCOTT GRONERT

IN FOCUS EDITOR: DEANNA ALBA



FIND US AT [UWMLETSCI](https://www.uwmletsci.com)

Second chance program helps students finish what they started

What you need to know:

- UWM’s new Access to Second Chance program supports students who started college but did not finish their degrees by encouraging them to return to finish their education.
- The program provides scholarships and coaching to support returning students.
- Hear from two psychology majors who have returned to UWM to complete their bachelor’s degrees.

Kayla Miller had just a little under 30 credits left to go to complete her degree in psychology when she left UWM in the fall semester of 2022. Her father had died unexpectedly, and she was a single parent raising two children. She thought about returning to school in the spring 2023 semester, but then “life, my job and my family got in the way.”

Now Miller is back in class with the help of a new program that provided incentives and support to help students overcome barriers to returning to finish their degrees.

Over the summer of 2023, UWM started the Access to a Second Chance program to help students like Miller who have “stopped out” before completing their degrees. Among other incentives, the program provides financial grants and support from a re-entry coach.

So far, the program has awarded \$340,000 in scholarships from the Moon Shot for Equity Fund to 558 students returning to UWM to complete their degree. This has led to an increase of 5% in stop-out students with more than 90 credits who have returned to the university.

Coaching builds confidence

For Samantha Scaffidi, a junior working toward her degree in studio arts, the coaching has been a key factor in building her confidence. She left the university during the 2019-20 academic year, partly because she was unsure she had chosen the right major and partly because of the pandemic. Now she is back and thriving in her new major with renewed confidence in her decision to complete her degree.

“Before I didn’t have confidence in myself or what I was doing,” Scaffidi said. Now, she’s really enjoying school, she added. “Jenna (Balek) has been super helpful.” Balek is re-entry manager for the Student Success Center and one of the members of the Navigate Success Team that helps students make their comeback.

Scott Sutton had started at UWM two times before returning this fall. In 2007, right out of high school, he started a music education and clarinet performance major, but decided that wasn’t what he wanted to do. So, he accepted a job offer at the Apple Store in Mayfair Mall. In 2016, he gave college another try – choosing a major in industrial engineering. However, when he began doing internships in robotics and lasers, he found he was bored, so he left school again.

After he met up with recruiters from Rogers Behavioral Health Center, he took a job with that organization as a mental health technician. “It’s been a great fit, and I love it.” So, he came back to UWM during the fall semester to work on his bachelor’s degree in psychology.

Finding a balance

The team working with the students helps them explore options that help them balance jobs, families and classes. They can also connect them with opportunities for additional scholarships.

Miller is working full-time at a law firm and chose online classes as the best fit for her life. Scaffidi switched from a full-time job to part-time work as a bartender so she could attend classes Monday through Friday.

The Access to Second Chance team makes a point to reach out to students who might be interested in completing their degree, contacting them with outreach campaigns and phone calls.

That personal contact and the financial aid made a difference for Miller. She was just beginning to think about returning when she was contacted about the “[Moon Shot for Equity Pounce Back Scholarship](#)” by email. Although she doesn’t check email much in the summer, a follow-up call helped her make the decision.

She is grateful UWM staff members were persistent in seeking her out to let her know about the opportunity, Miller said.

“It honestly made me feel really good since I don’t have many options for financial aid,” she said. “This grant helps me a lot. I’m still going to end up paying a little bit out of pocket, but definitely this is going to assist me. Had I not gotten it, I’m not sure I would have been able to afford to go back this semester.”

Scholarship helps

Sutton received a Moon Shot Pounce Back Scholarship and plans to graduate in May 2025. “The process was really easy and well laid out,” and the scholarship really helped, he said. He expressed his gratitude to the team in an email:

“I just wanted to thank you, so much, for helping me obtain this scholarship. It has made a HUGE positive impact in helping me to afford returning to college, and I couldn’t be more grateful. Thank you, thank you, thank you!”

Although finishing her degree while raising her children and working is challenging, Miller is also determined to finish. She was attracted to the field of psychology after she received much-needed counseling help from a therapist when she faced some personal challenges.

“I want to get my degree, maybe go on for a master’s degree. It’s not just about making a bit more money in this field. I really have a passion for this kind of work because I really want to help people.”

By Kathy Quirk, Marketing & Communications



Scott Sutton dropped out of UWM twice. But he finally found his career path in the field of mental health, so he recently returned to pursue a degree in psychology. “It’s been a great fit, and I love it,” he said. (UWM Photo/Elora Hennessey)

CES alumna cares for trees in Chugach National Forest, Alaska

What you need to know:

- Riley Thomas, a conservation & environmental science graduate, is now a forestry technician at the Chugach National Forest in Alaska.
- Thomas works to mitigate the damage caused by spruce bark beetle, a pest that has had a population boom thanks to climate change.

If a forest technician falls while hiking through a forest and no one is there to see it, does her backside still hurt?

Unequivocally, yes.

“There is no trail where we walk,” said Riley Thomas, a forestry technician in the [Chugach National Forest](#) in Alaska. “You are bushwhacking through all kinds of brush. There are a lot of tripping hazards. You’re just going to fall every now and then. You just have to laugh at yourself.”

But, she said, “It’s amazing being out in the woods where almost no one else has gone before.”

Thomas began her job shortly after graduating from UWM in May with her BS and a major in conservation and environmental science. She phoned in from her post outside of Seward, Alaska, to talk about her work, the importance of natural spaces, and why spruce bark beetles are so pesky.

You have the perfect job for someone who is interested in conservation and the outdoors. What drew you to environmental science?

I have always been really involved in the outdoors and nature. As I got older, I became more aware about problems such as climate change. I decided I wanted to put my passion to good use and do something with my interest in the outdoors to make a difference. I chose UWM for college because of the Conservation & Environmental Science program.

Tell me about the Chugach National Forest.

The Chugach National Forest is the second-largest national forest in the U.S. The first is the [Tongass](#), which is also in Alaska. The Chugach is the northernmost temperate rainforest, which is a really neat ecosystem. There’s a lot of rain, which can be kind of gloomy, but when you learn what it does for the ecosystem and all the plants and wildlife that it provides for, it doesn’t seem so gloomy anymore.

There are 10,000 glaciers just in the forest alone. It’s a beautiful place. There are brown bears and black bears and moose. Bald eagles are super prevalent in the forest. Part of the forest is a byway for a lot of migrating birds. There’s also a cool weasel called the ermine – a very cute little weasel that turns white in the winter. Salmon are also an integral part of the forest. There’s wildlife everywhere.

What does a forestry technician do?

It really depends on the forest. I specifically am on the spruce bark beetle crew. The district that I work in has been negatively affected by spruce bark beetles. They had a population boom around 2019. Because the population boom, they’ve killed off hundreds of thousands of acres of spruce trees. Our crew goes to randomized plots that we’re going to treat or are thinking of treating. We do randomized surveys and take data on the trees – their age, their height, how big they are around.

We also take data on what kinds of plants are present in the area, and see if there’s any regeneration of trees happening there. If there’re saplings of birch or cottonwood or spruce or hemlock or any other kind of trees we have in the forest, we’re taking note of all of that. There’s also fire prevention as well. Are there a lot of grasses in the area by all these dead trees? That’s a potential fire hazard and we need to mitigate that.



Riley Thomas ties a marker around a tree to designate a boundary area in the Chugach National Forest in Alaska, where she works as a forestry technician. Photo courtesy of Riley Thomas.

What conservation work do you do with the spruces to fight back against bark beetles?

Spruces produce a mass amount of cones every five to six years. When that happened this fall, we collected cones to grow saplings to regenerate the forest with after we cut down all of the old spruces. We had climbers from Oregon to help us get cones from the branches at the top of these gigantic spruce trees and toss them down. We’re also looking at genetics to see what kind of spruce live in different areas on the Kenai Peninsula.

At the same time, we are collecting birch seeds. You collect birch seeds yearly by essentially shaking the birch tree, because their cones are filled with flaky seeds. You have a tarp underneath the trees to catch the seeds, and we’ll use those to regenerate the forests as well after we treat them for spruce bark beetle.

Between invasive species and wildfires, what do you see as the biggest hazard to the forest?

The pests that I work with are actually native! The only reason why they have had quite the population boom is climate change. Spruce bark beetles thrive in warm and dry climates. When it’s warmer and drier in the forest due to climactic changes, that means they can produce more offspring and harm more trees.

Cold ecosystems like most of Alaska are relatively fragile to any change in temperature. I think all but one of the glaciers in the forest are receding, and exceedingly fast, which can change the ecosystem very rapidly, especially when you’re removing a support on mountainsides. Then what is that rock to do? It can create landslides, which can end up being tsunamis because many of these receding glaciers are on the ocean here, which can cause a huge problem.

Those are just a few examples, but climate change is rearing its ugly head.

What can regular people like me do to help our National Parks?

Even just supporting your local county and state parks is important because a lot of funding depends on how much places are visited, and by how many people. You can volunteer. [Milwaukee Riverkeeper](#) is a great resource for cleanups on the river. I know Milwaukee County Parks has a lot of cleanup events, and every spring they have a volunteer wetland monitoring program. The Conservation Club on the UWM campus also has a lot of great resources for getting involved in conservation around the Milwaukee area.

If you’re interested in more of a nationwide or global impact, petitions are a great way to put your name on something that will help various conservation efforts. I think petitions are a great way to have a say in what is being done to the world around you. While you may feel powerless, putting your name and your zip code down on the list of folks helps more than you think.

What is one thing you want people to know about the forest?

Natural places around you are important. While the natural spaces around Milwaukee don’t exactly look like the ones in Alaska, that doesn’t mean you can’t appreciate them. I think natural spaces provide a lot of services to a lot of people.

By Sarah Vickery, College of Letters & Science

Excavation under the sea: UWM alumni and faculty explore underwater archaeology

What you need to know:

- Two UWM alumni, Sara Rich and Peter Campbell, and new UWM faculty member Ashley Lemke are all underwater archaeologists.
- Underwater archaeology is the excavation of submerged shipwrecks, prehistoric landscapes, and other artifacts.
- Underwater archaeology has its unique dangers, but can give researchers incredible insight into the past in a variety of ways.

Off the coast of the island of Fournoi in Greece lies a sunken graveyard.

“Here we discovered the largest concentration of ancient shipwrecks in the world,” said Peter Campbell, an underwater archaeologist and a Lecturer at Cranfield University in England. “The first group of ships we saw were from the third century A.D. We kept swimming and found some from the fourth century A.D., and kept swimming and found some from the second century B.C.”

Why did this area of the ocean claim so many ships? Where were these vessels heading? What was their cargo? What can they tell us about the past?

Those are some of the many mysteries that Campbell and other underwater archaeologists attempt to solve as they plumb the depths of lakes, rivers, and oceans, recovering pieces of history that have long been lost to the water.

Some of those archaeologists, like Campbell, got their start at UW-Milwaukee. Now, thanks to a new hire in UWM’s Anthropology Department, more students will be able to literally get their feet wet with a novel facet of excavation.

Down in the depths

Most people are familiar with archaeological digs on land. From the pyramids of Egypt to hidden temples in Southeast Asia, re-discovered ruins and artifacts have given researchers insights into the lives of ancient peoples. UWM’s Anthropology Department regularly [leads students on excavations](#) that scour Wisconsin’s ground for artifacts like pottery, stone sherds, arrowheads, and more.

But underwater archaeology is a different beast. For one thing, you need an air tank.

“The safety issues are paramount,” said Sara Rich, who earned her Master’s in Art History from UWM and is now a professor of honors and interdisciplinary studies at Coastal Carolina University.

Rich is a maritime archaeologist whose explorations have led her to excavations in the English Channel, the Mediterranean Sea, and even the rivers of South Carolina.

Just like any scuba diver, underwater archaeologist must be mindful of how much oxygen is in their air tank. They must be in good shape to swim and dive. Then there’s the pressure to consider: At deep depths, the weight of the water bearing down on a diver compresses the nitrogen in their bloodstream. If divers resurface too quickly without allowing the nitrogen time to reabsorb into their bodies, they can end up with life-threatening decompression sickness.

Plus, nitrogen can make you feel a little loopy when you’re under the water, said Rich.

“Even at shallower sites, nitrogen narcosis is a thing. Nitrogen doesn’t just threaten you with the bends; it also affects your brain,” she said. “You get down to the bottom and you start doing silly things or you forget what you’re doing down there at

all. You have to make a list on a slate and then check the things on that list ... otherwise, you will not remember and you’ll mess everything up.”

So when faced with all of these safety issues, why bother risking life and limb to excavate underwater sites?

“You can do archaeology on land, and a lot of us do, but the data underwater is vastly, vastly better most of the time, than working on land,” Ashley Lemke explained. “It gives you a finer picture of what life in the past was like.”

Lemke joined the UWM Anthropology Department in September as its newest faculty member. She specializes in underwater archaeology and has been teaching a class on it this fall.

The process of excavation

An underwater archaeological dig actually begins on land. Researchers first talk to locals to leverage their knowledge about where to dive. That’s how Campbell and his colleagues found the ship graveyard in the Fournoi Islands.

“We were working with the local fisherman and sponge divers,” he recalled. “Some of them had circled this one rocky cliff face. The sponge divers said, dive right here and you’ll find a forest.”

Once they have a likely location, scientists use tools like sonar or multibeam to make two- or three-dimensional images of the landscape below the surface. They can also send down Remote Operated Vehicles – Lemke has named hers Jake – which are small robots that can take pictures of the excavation site. When the archaeologists have a good idea of where they’re going, they go diving. At deeper sites, where divers might experience issues with nitrogen, researchers can stay under the water for only about 20 minutes at a time. They may take hundreds of photographs of the site and stitch those images together on the surface to build a 3D model of the excavation.

“You have a record of the layers of the shipwreck,” said Rich. “It also makes it a lot easier to track looting.”

The things they find are fascinating. Shipwrecks are obviously interesting and full of archaeological evidence to offer information about the past. But sometimes, there are civilizations beneath the waves.

Lemke studies hunter-gatherer societies among early Native Americans – specifically ones that lived in areas that have been subsequently covered by the Great Lakes. Lemke got her research start in Lake Huron in search of sites constructed by early indigenous groups that were submerged when water levels on the Great Lakes rose.

Rich has also explored submerged settlements, this time in the English Channel, and says the information from history gives us insight into emerging patterns today.

“As the polar ice has melted in the Holocene, of course you have a lot of saltwater ingress into previously occupied terrestrial areas. As that landscape was drowned, the people who lived there moved to higher ground,” she noted. “It’s almost like an early proxy for what we’re seeing now as sea levels rise.”

“When you start looking at the past and that shared history of humanity, you can’t help but be surprised by how similar we all are,” Lemke said.

By Sarah Vickery, College of Letters & Science



A diver examines a submerged structure from a prehistoric hunter/gatherer society in Lake Huron. Photo courtesy of Ashley Lemke.

[Continued on Page 8](#)

Underwater archaeology

[Continued from Page 7](#)

Meet Sara Rich

Sara Rich grew up in Kansas, more than 1,000 miles away from the nearest ocean, but the water always called her. Maybe it was the way the wind made ripples in the Kansas wheat fields that mimicked waves on the sea, or maybe it was a forgotten memory from when her father was in the Navy. Whatever the reason, Rich knew she was meant for the coast.

And when she learned about the [Uluburun](#) shipwreck during an undergraduate archaeology class, Rich was enamored. Completely bored with her printing and publishing job at the time, “I decided one day on my lunch break to walk down to the dive shop, which was called the Scuba Shack,” Rich recalled. “It doubles as a Volkswagen repair shop as well. So, I signed up for diving lessons, and I thought, this is definitely what I should be doing with my life.”

Later, Rich combined her interest in art history and diving by earning her Master’s in Art History under the mentorship of Distinguished Professor of Art History Derek Counts, who is an expert on ancient Mediterranean art. Rich is now a faculty member at Coastal Carolina University. She and Peter Campbell are also the co-editors of a new book, *Contemporary Philosophy for Maritime Archaeology: Flat Ontologies, Oceanic Thought, and the Anthropocene*.

Rich has varied research interests. She’s excavated the remains of a submerged settlement in the English Channel, and ships from the Revolutionary War near Charleston Harbor in South Carolina. But her main area of focus is actually the wood of the shipwrecks she’s excavating.

“My goal is to try to find out, using dendrochronology, approximately when the ship was built, or at least when the timber was sold in order to build the ship,” she explained. “With tree rings, if you have a good set of dendrological data set, you can also point to where the trees grow. You can get a sense of the relationship between forestry and shipbuilding, or in many cases, deforestation and shipbuilding.”

That may seem like esoteric information, but by studying this information from the past, Rich can begin to make educated guesses about the Earth’s future.

“I think that we’re in an era of increasing ecological awareness and understanding what exactly we have done to the environment, and when, and where. Understanding the relationships that we have built with the ecosystems in which we live is incredibly important for understanding the changes that we need to make as a society so that we have a future for our grandchildren,” Rich said



UWM alumna Sara Rich dives during an excavation at the Caduceus wreck south of Hayling Island in England. Photo courtesy of Sara Rich.

Meet Peter Campbell

Peter Campbell has a rule when he’s excavating shipwrecks.

“I decided I just want to work in a warm environment,” he said firmly.

Luckily, there are plenty of sites in the Mediterranean Sea for him to explore. Campbell works almost entirely in that body of water, and just returned from a summer project exploring wrecks in the Strait of Sicily.

“It’s been this crossroads of empires in every time period, from the Neolithic until today. ... We’re still waiting to publish results, because we’ve had stuff from many different time periods, lots of historic shipwrecks,” Campbell said. “That moment of discovery is incredible, where you see something that nobody has seen in thousands of years, and then start to piece together what happened there.”

Campbell grew up down the road from UWM in Whitefish Bay, where he got to spend time looking for the old, lost Whitefish Bay pier and free diving on the *SS Appomattox*. The ship, from 1896, sunk just off Shorewood, Wisconsin and is the world’s largest wooden shipwreck. His curiosity was also piqued by the sunken Viking ships had been discovered near Denmark where his family visited each summer.

Meet Ashley Lemke

About 99 percent of underwater archaeologists study shipwrecks. Ashley Lemke is the 1 percent.

Lemke studies hunter-gatherer cultures, people who lived before the advent of agriculture and subsisted on hunting wild animals and foraging plants. Much of her research has centered around Ice Age settlements in what is now Lake Huron that were eventually covered as water levels rose as the Earth warmed.

Now that Lemke is in her first year as an associate professor at UW-Milwaukee, she hopes she can start similar excavation projects in Lake Michigan. She’s been talking to the local dive community and academic experts to try and pinpoint where hunter-gatherer societies may have once lived. She wants to find evidence like arrowheads, tools, and even ancient structures.

“Some of the coolest stuff (to find) is actually environmental,” Lemke said. “There are 9,000-year-old trees at the bottom of the lake. There’s a peat bog that we discovered two years ago that has intact 9,000 year old seeds. The preservation is amazing.”

She’s also intrigued by obsidian sherds she’s found at some of the excavation sites. Obsidian is a volcanic rock that is not naturally found in the Midwest.

“Those materials actually come from Oregon. That was a cool discovery because it means that people at the end of the last ice age had trade routes or exchange networks where they were passing things back and forth over a huge distance,” Lemke said.

Now Lemke is passing on her knowledge in her classes at UWM. Her new class on underwater archaeology delves into its methodology, how it relates to history, anthropology, shipwrecks, sunken cities, and prehistoric landscapes. The class covers sites like the submerged city of Port Royal and the wreck of the Titanic.

Lemke brings plenty of experience to the job; she earned her PhD at the University of Michigan and was previously a faculty member at the University of Texas at Arlington. Lemke has also served as the youngest-ever chair of the Advisory Council.



Assistant professor of anthropology Ashley Lemke smiles while preparing equipment for a dive. Photo courtesy of Ashley Lemke.

It all piqued his interest in archaeology, and so Campbell majored in anthropology when he attended UWM. He later earned his Master’s at East Carolina University and his PhD at Southampton University in the United Kingdom. He now teaches at Cranfield University in England.

These days, he specializes in ancient trade and navigation, analyzing the different historical groups that were moving and trading, and how social and environmental factors impacted their behavior. But, Campbell has another area of interest: He also studies and teaches underwater forensics.

“This is documenting crime scenes underwater and searching for human remains. There’s a lot of overlap between archaeology and forensics,” Campbell said.

Underwater forensics comes in many forms. Campbell has contracted with the U.S. Department of Defense to try and locate the remains of missing service members and their aircrafts shot down during World War II. He trains police in methods to survey water to find drowning victims or recover discarded weapons. He also works to educate the public about heritage crime, including the destruction or looting of cultural sites.

Whatever form they take, Campbell loves solving underwater mysteries – as long as the water is warm.



UWM alum Peter Campbell studies an artifact he found during an underwater excavation in the Mediterranean Sea. Photo courtesy of Peter Campbell.

Storytelling as research offers insights into society's needs

What you need to know:

- The Center for 21st Century Studies' Story Cart project explores topics that foster themes of democracy. This year's project is called "Nourishing Trust."
- Graduate students interviewed people at grocery stores, food pantries, markets and more about their experiences with food.
- Questions included how people shop, how they get to grocery stores, and what meaningful food connections look like.

Buying or obtaining groceries and preparing food may sound like mundane tasks, but collecting information on how people seek and connect with food can actually foster understanding and help us communicate in a polarized world, said Nicole Welk-Joerger.

Welk-Joerger, former deputy director of UWM's [Center for 21st Century Studies](#), directed the center's [Story Cart Project](#), in which UWM graduate students and researchers traveled with a mobile cart to 27 Milwaukee locations to question strangers about food.

They went to grocery stores, farmers markets, food pantries and even a few block parties to record interviews and invite participants, including kids, to talk about or do artwork about food in their lives. Questions included where they usually gather their food, how they get to those places, and what meaningful, trusting food connections look like to them.

"There are historical, sociological, political and environmental conditions that impact why we do the things that we do day-to-day," Welk-Joerger said. "So those impacts will be incorporated into the stories we collect."

The Story Cart Project spans multiple years and themes, exploring three topics that foster or push back on ideas of democracy. This year, interviews focused on the theme of "Nourishing Trust" with food stories. Last year's project, "[Lonely No More!](#)," centered on people's views about loneliness or connectedness. For next year's project, which gets underway in spring, the theme is "Trust in the Vote."

For "Nourishing Trust," location was key to gathering different kinds of stories, so the C21 researchers chose neighborhoods that reflect Milwaukee's diverse population.

By summer's end, the graduate students had amassed more than 10 hours of audio recordings, hundreds of photographs and dozens of drawings. The information has inspired "Milwaukee Food Journeys: A Story Exhibition," featuring the creative interpretation of artists affiliated with [LUNA](#) and [True Skool](#).

The interactive mixed media installation highlights issues of food access, food justice and how Milwaukeeans think about sustenance and trust. The exhibit is on display at [The Table](#), 5305 W. Capitol Drive, until the end of the winter market season.

Where food and democracy intersect

Because the results are closely tied to places, they figure prominently in the next step of the project – mapping the information.

"Mapping this will be a really eye-opening because then you will be able to see that, within only a few minutes' drive, how different people's habits are and if that's by necessity or choice," Welk-Joerger said. "But we're also interested in the commonalities it will reveal. Because, if we're

trying to find ways to have hard conversations about public issues, we need to know what we have in common."

Jessie Thompson, a master's student in the Sustainable Peacebuilding program, worked as a story cart interviewer during the summer. The program is closely related to other work she is involved in – helping to build a sortable map of all the food actors in the county.

"This will help determine where the needs are. For example, in the Milwaukee ZIP code 53206 there's a high concentration of food pantries, but not a lot of grocery stores," Thompson said. "So we're trying to dig into the system and ask why this is happening."

An eye-opening experience

For interviewer and doctoral student Jamee Pritchard, the Story Cart experience was often "eye-opening." She remembers speaking to a nurse who said that every member of her household was employed, yet they still had to supplement their food budget by signing up for SNAP benefits and using food pantries.

"I also noticed that the theme of food and trust came out in the interviews," Pritchard said. "Many of the people we spoke to said they did not trust the food at traditional grocery stores and preferred to shop at farmer's markets or stores like Outpost, where they felt more comfortable with the quality and freshness of the food." One interviewee, she said, refused to shop in Milwaukee and drove to Madison instead.



Yuchen Zhao records an interview between a participant and Spanish translator Maria Julia Baldor (right). Photo courtesy of the Center for 21st Century Studies.



Jamee Pritchard, a PhD student in African and African Diaspora Studies, asks a young visitor to the South Shore farmers market about her favorite foods. Photo courtesy of the Center for 21st Century Studies.

[Yuchen Zhao](#), a doctoral student in the Urban Studies Program, also joined the Story Cart team this year. He was drawn by his own scholarship that examines how food places link people and how food is integrated into the family culture.

Food as culture

He remembers a story that came from two Hmong farmers who were selling their produce at the Fondy Farmers Market. Zhao wanted to know what pantry food is common in the Hmong community. Hmong families, the farmers told him, gather to make and eat spring rolls together.

"The entire thing is a social event," he said. "For my own interests, I wanted to see what the cultural traditions are. Through the stories we're collecting, we can get a broader understanding of those cultural aspects."

Others who were involved in the project were AJ Segneri, doctoral student in geography; Haley Rose Steines, master's student in art history; Muriel Marseille, doctoral student in urban studies; and Spanish translators Maria Julia Baldor and Maria Estrella Sotomayor.

The Nourishing Trust Story Cart Project was funded in part by the USDA's Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program with additional support from the College of Letters & Science, the Center for 21st Century Studies, The Table and Alice's Garden.

By Laura Otto, Marketing & Communications

UWM and MCW partner to offer accelerated BS, PharmD degrees

What you need to know:

- UWM and the Medical College of Wisconsin are now offering a dual-degree program that will allow students to earn a bachelor's and a PharmD degree in as little as six years.
- The program addresses a shortage of pharmacists and will help students save money and time on their degrees.
- This marks UWM's fourth partnership with pharmacy schools to help students earn their PharmD degree in less time than usual.

A new partnership between UW-Milwaukee and the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) allows students to earn their PharmD degree in just six years.

UWM and MCW announced in October that the institutions will offer an accelerated program that allows students to earn both a bachelor's and a PharmD degree in as little as six years.

That's important because the nation and Wisconsin are facing a shortage of retail pharmacists. Currently, Walgreens alone reports more than 50 currently open pharmacist positions across Wisconsin.

"The traditional pathway to becoming a pharmacist – four years of college followed by four years of pharmacy school – can seem daunting to many, particularly first-generation students," said Scott Gronert, dean of UWM's College of Letters & Science. "Programs like this that streamline the experience will attract more students and help fill the demand for pharmacists faster. Today's pharmacists play a critical role for individuals and for the public health system, providing vaccinations, health screenings, mass education and chronic disease management."

UWM has three other similar partnerships already in place:

An agreement with Northwestern University, located in the Chicago suburbs, has two options – dual admission to both UWM and Northwestern University for high school seniors or early admission while a student is a freshman at UWM. Under either option, students proceed directly to the PharmD degree at Northwestern after they complete their foundational science prerequisites at UWM, leaving without a bachelor's degree.

The 3+4 Accelerated Program with Concordia University allows students to spend three years at UWM and four years in Concordia's PharmD program to earn both their bachelor's and PharmD degrees.

And, University of Wisconsin-Madison's Early Assurance program accepts applications from students in their first semester of freshman year. If accepted, students proceed to Madison's pharmacy school as soon as they complete their foundational science prerequisites and leave UWM without a bachelor's degree.

Adding the partnership with MCW makes sense because it offers students one more option to complete their PharmD degree on a faster-than-normal timeline but also close to the Milwaukee area, said Laura Stark, a senior advisor who counsels students in Letters & Science's pre-pharmacy track.

One of those prospective students is Sundus Elchekha, who has already expressed an interest in the new program.

"What drew my interest to the dual degree program was the convenience of saving time and money," she said. "I hope to be able to give back to patients in necessary care with my PharmD degree. As a pharmacy tech, I see the quality care pharmacists provide to patients, and that really inspires me."

Application deadlines vary by program and can be as early as senior year of high school. The ideal time for biology, microbiology or biochemistry majors to apply for the Medical College of Wisconsin program is during freshman or sophomore year of college. Students will then be partnered with an MCW faculty member and have access to career discussions and shadowing opportunities with MCW's clinical partners.

Stark says the ideal candidate for an accelerated program is a student with a strong interest in math and science. "It's definitely more intensive than just doing the prerequisites and spreading things out over the four-year time frame," she warned.

Even though the program can be intense, the accelerated time frame has its advantages.

"This dual-degree program reduces the overall cost of undergraduate and professional education at two outstanding institutions by reducing two full years of education," said George E. MacKinnon III, PhD, MS, RPh, FASHP, FNAP, founding dean of the MCW School of Pharmacy. "The partnership with UW-Milwaukee, the second-largest institution of higher learning in the state, will help those living in southeastern Wisconsin remain in the area for their full breadth of education from baccalaureate to Doctor of Pharmacy degree, reducing costs associated with moving to other campuses, while still being able to remain engaged in the local community."

The MCW School of Pharmacy is one of only 18 institutions in the country that offers an accelerated three-year program to a PharmD degree. It is the only pharmacy school in southeastern Wisconsin located at an academic medical center, providing students with access to clinical experiences with Froedtert Hospital, Children's Wisconsin and the Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center.

Information on pre-pharmacy – including more details about each of the accelerated options – is available at the [College of Letters & Science webpage](#) or by contacting let-sci@uwm.edu.

By Sarah Vickery and Deanna Alba, College of Letters & Science

Geography student spots rare bug

As part of the newly revamped Geography Field Work course, geography professor Alison Donnelly brought students on a site visit to the UWM Field Station in Saukville, Wisconsin.

The aim of the trip was to give students an opportunity to see for themselves the management practices and challenges associated with conservation efforts for a range of natural habitats including woodland, grassland and bog. Field station manager Paul Engevoled lead the students on a walk through the entire property to visit each of these unique ecosystems.

While walking on the boardwalk through Cedarburg bog, undergraduate student Stephanie Barker's keen eye spotted an unusual insect sitting very still on the branch of a northern white-cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*) shrub.

Engvoled came to inspect the discovery and knew immediately that it was something unusual for the bog but wanted to get a second opinion, so he emailed the [BugLady](#) (Kate Redmond) who immediately confirmed his suspicion by identifying the moth as a buck moth (*Hemileuca maia*). This is a species of special concern in the area.

The importance of bringing students into the ecosystems they study in the classroom cannot be understated, and you never know what they might find!

Courtesy of the UWM Geography Department



Buck moth (*Hemileuca maia*) resting on a northern white-cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*) shrub



Geography students in the old growth beech woodland at the UWM Field Station, Fall 2023. Cory Chiconas, Akash Pradeep, Kain Pearson, Collin Adams, Cade Kufahl, Dianna Davis, Stephanie Barker, and Paul Engevoled (Field Station Director).

Geosciences celebrates its 60th anniversary



The UWM Department of Geosciences celebrated its 60th anniversary in November by bringing together department members, friends of Geosciences, and alumni from across the country for a two-day celebration honoring the department and its accomplishments over the years.

Celebrants gathered for a packed weekend on Nov. 3-4 that included a brewpub meet-up and a Wisconsin geologic walk. Guests were treated to a behind-the-scenes tour of the Thomas A. Greene Geological Museum, which contains the fossil and mineral collection of Thomas A. Greene. Guests were also able to tour the department's research labs and attend a meet-and-greet session with some of the department's emeritus faculty during an open house.

The weekend capped off with a celebratory dinner for faculty, staff, and alumni. Over its 60 year history, the Geosciences Department has seen a number of its talented students earn degrees, and many of them returned to Milwaukee from their homes on the east coast, west coast, and fresh coast of the Great Lakes. Their love for the department shone; some returning alumni earned their degrees back in the 1970s.

One such alumnus is Alderman Michael Murphy, who has long served on the Milwaukee Common Council. The Common Council also celebrated and recognized the Department of Geosciences with a proclamation recognizing its impact on Milwaukee.

After all, as department members are fond of saying, Geosciences rocks!

Contributed by Professor Dyanna Czeck, Chair, Department of Geosciences

(Top Left) Geosciences professor Dyanna Czeck leads a Wisconsin geologic walk for a group of alumni and friends of the Geosciences Department. **(Top Right)** Dyanna Czeck and associate professor Julie Bowles hold up a proclamation from the City of Milwaukee honoring the Geosciences Department. **(Bottom right)** A group of alumni and faculty meet at a brew pub to share memories and laughter. Photos courtesy of the UWM Geosciences Department.



Upcoming Events

Recurring December events

Art Works: Recent Donations to the UWM Art Collection. Emile H. Mathis Art Gallery. Art Works places the spotlight on curation and research practices at the UWM Art Collection and [Emile H. Mathis Art Gallery](#). Exhibits run Monday-Thursday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. through Feb. 8, 2024.

Weekly Irish Language Table. 1-2 p.m. Merrill G16. All learning levels welcome. Held Fridays throughout the semester. Refreshments provided.

Planetarium Show: Colorful Nebulas. 7-8 p.m. Manfred Olson Planetarium. Explore gorgeous clouds that give birth to stars. Witness the birth and death of stars and the breathtaking beauty of these interstellar clouds. Show not recommended for children under 4. [Tickets](#) are \$5-\$6. Held Dec. 8 and 15.

Dec. 13

Climate Justice in the City. 4:30-5:30 p.m. Bolton B60. Jennifer Rice, University of Georgia, presents. Free and open to the public.

Planetarium Show: Celestial Celebrations - Jewish Traditions. 7-8 p.m. Manfred Olson Planetarium. Learn how and why astronomical phenomena influence Hanukkah, the Hebrew calendar, and Jewish observance. Featuring guest speaker Rabbi Joshua Herman. [Tickets](#) are \$6.

Dec. 15

Planetarium Event: Rooftop Stargazing. 8-9 p.m. Physics Building Skydeck. Free, public stargazing with provided telescopes. In the event of inclement weather, the event will be cancelled.

| DECEMBER 2023 | | | | | | |
|---------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
| | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| 31 | | | | | | |



Laurels and Accolades

Patrick Bellegarde-Smith (emeritus African & African Diaspora Studies) was presented with the Mapou Lifetime Achievement Award by the Congress of Santa Barbara (KOSANBA) in October. The award recognizes Bellegarde-Smith's contributions and dedication to advancing the intellectual study of vodou, the national religion of Haiti, and other African-derived religions. Bellegarde-Smith is an expert on Haiti and holds a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Haitian Studies Association.



Patrick Bellegarde-Smith

Doctoral student **Sean Enfield (English)** will publish his essay collection, *Holy American Burnout!*, on Dec. 5 with a [Zoom event](#) to celebrate its launch that evening. Enfield will read from his work and be in conversation with poet and essayist Sarah Fawn Montgomery. A release event will take place at [Woodland Pattern Books](#) in Milwaukee on Dec. 6 with other UWM doctoral students in attendance. Enfield's collection has already garnered praise, including a [Kirkus star](#) in its first review.

Trudy Turner (emerita Anthropology) was named Distinguished Primatologist 2023 by the Midwest Primatology Interest Group (MPIG) and gave the Keynote Address at their annual meeting at Washington University in St. Louis on October 6.

Philip Shasko (emeritus History) was granted [honorary membership](#) in the *Academica Balkanica Europaea*. The organization was founded in 2017 to promote academic, cultural, and diplomatic connections and relationships between the Balkans in southeastern Europe and the rest of the European continent. Shasko joins a distinguished cohort of inductees, including scholars, artists, politicians, and other leaders in their fields.



Philip Shasko



In the Media and Around the Community

The zombie genre manages to fascinate and horrify audiences with popular movies, shows, and books. **Drago Momcilovic (Comparative Literature)** explained why on [WUWM's Lake Effect](#).

The [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#) spoke with **Swarnjit Arora (emeritus Economics)** about the difficulties facing international students and the ways in which Arora tries to help them navigate life in America.

If you pressed a button to turn on your radio in November, you may have heard **Jason Puskar (English)** speaking on [Wisconsin Public Radio](#) about his new book, which explores the impact of buttons and switches.

One way to reduce deer-related car crashes is to gain a better understanding of deer behavior, **Chris Young (Conservation & Environmental Science)** told the [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#).

Bettina Arnold (Anthropology) represented UWM at an international conference sponsored by the [Getty Foundation](#) in Athens, Greece from Nov. 3-5.

Maria Novotny (English) read from her new work, *Infertilities: A Curation* at a public event in [Madison, Wisconsin](#) in November.

William Holahan (emeritus Economics) explained ranked choice voting in an opinion piece for the [Shepherd Express](#).

As Milwaukee debates public funding to finance improvements to sports venues like American Family field, [TMJ4 News](#) spoke with **Michael Mirer (Communications)** about the controversy.

Andrew Holmen (Public & Nonprofit Administration) spoke about charitable giving and volunteering in an article published by [WalletHub](#).



When a 3.6 magnitude earthquake shook parts of Illinois and Wisconsin, [Fox 6 News](#) and [Wisconsin Public Radio](#) turned to **Brett Ketter (Geosciences)** to explain the phenomenon.

Einstein@Home is a way for citizen scientists to assist with scientific research, including with a new project called "Pulsar Seekers." The [National Tribune](#) spoke with project leader **Rahul Sengar (Physics)** about the initiative. [CBS 58 News](#) also ran an article on the project.

Jeffrey Sommers (Global Studies and African & African Diaspora Studies) was the feature interview on Nov. 21st for Paul Jay's program [theAnalysis.news](#), titled, "The Russian Oligarchy and the Civilization State."

Migration is a fraught process, but can be especially daunting for pregnant women. **Camila Guarda Velasco (Journalism, Advertising, & Media Studies)** translated their stories in an article published in the [Chicago Sun Times](#) and on [WBEZ Radio](#).



Alumni Accomplishments

Christie Launius ('03, PhD English) was named interim head of the social transformation studies department at [Kansas State University](#). Launius, an associate professor, took over the position in June. Launius joined the university in 2018, and previously led women's and gender studies programs at UW-Oshkosh and Augusta University.

Christopher Storms ('12, BS Physics) was profiled on [LegalNews.com](#) for his remarkable journey from a career in electrical engineering to entering law school to become a patent lawyer. Storms held positions as patent engineer and patent agent, as well as founding his own business, before making the jump to law school.

Richa Karmarker ('20, BA History; Religious Studies; and Journalism, Advertising, & Media Studies) was hired as a reporter by the [Religion News Service \(RNS\)](#) in July. Karmarker is based in New York and will generally cover Hinduism for the publication. RNS is an independent, nonprofit source of global news on religion, spirituality, culture and ethics.

Jason Eden ('96, BA History) is [Wayne State College's](#) newest assistant professor of history. Eden has begun working on faculty development in addition to teaching a new class focusing on U.S. History from 1945-present. Eden previously worked at St. Cloud State University in Minnesota.

Kweku Akyirefi Amoasi ('03, PhD Psychology), formerly known as Ramel Smith, joined the staff at WNOV 860am/106.5 FM radio and hosts a show titled, "[Nyumba Upendo](#)," which translates to "House of Love." The show runs Wednesdays at 11 a.m. and tackles issues surrounding mental health and mental illness. Amoasi is the President of Blaquesmith Psychological Services, Inc.

Pamela Lyons ('03, BA Journalism, Advertising, & Media Studies) was an invited speaker at a Lightning Talk event on the topic of "Influenced/Influencer" hosted by [Women in Design](#) at the Lubar Entrepreneurship Center in November. Lyons is a communications manager at VJS Construction.

Havidan Rodriguez ('86, MA Sociology) penned an essay that was included in a special edition of [Footnotes](#), a magazine of the American Sociological Association. The edition marked the 50th anniversary of the ASA Minority Fellowship Program (MFP) and included several mentions of UW-Milwaukee.

Susan Manley ('92, BS Biology) was the featured speaker in an article published by [News Channel Nebraska](#). She educated readers on the importance of sharing family health histories, and pointed out that holiday gatherings may be an opportune time to have those conversations.



Pamela Lyons



Video Stories



Students, including a few from the College of Letters & Science, let their friends, families, and mentors know how grateful they are for their love and support. Watch the video [here](#).



Communications major Emma started at UWM's branch campus in Waukesha and loved the close-knit community there, but knew she'd eventually transfer to UWM's main campus 10 minutes from downtown Milwaukee. "It was a seamless transfer," she says. (UWM branch campus students only need to fill out a one-page form to transfer to the main campus.) Watch [here](#).

UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN
UW MILWAUKEE


