

# ACTUARIAL SCIENCE BULLETIN

## Welcome to our inaugural newsletter!

It is with great pleasure that I bring you news of the revamped UW Milwaukee Actuarial Program. Highlights of our achievements so far include:

- Introduction of new courses from undergraduate to PhD level
- Integrated actuarial classes with business and computing classes
- Encouragement and support for students taking professional examinations
- Vast increase of professional examinations passed by UWM students before graduation
- Added soft skills including teamwork, communication and presentations
- The activation of our club which now boasts over 60 members
- Mobilization of an experienced and energetic advisory board ensuring that UWM's program has its finger on the pulse of the profession
- Engaged outside speakers who have enamored us with their real-world, hands-on knowledge
- The re-invigoration of careers day using Handshake
- Affiliation with Wisconsin Actuarial Collegiate Conference
- The initiation of a mentoring program where professionals mentor our students
- Actively engaging student with career path navigation
- The development of a new website and established a social media presence

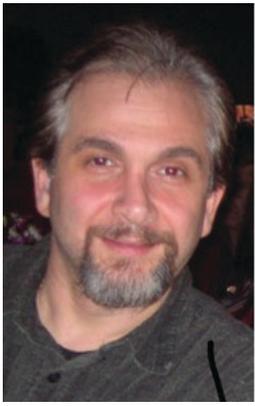
I would like to thank our highly qualified faculty for their hard work and dedication, commitment to students and our professional partners, as well as maintaining the **Center of Actuarial Excellence (CAE) designation**.

We look forward to continuing the relationships with our existing partners and also establishing new ones. Please feel free to contact me if you would like to partner with us on this fantastic journey.

A program could not exist without the hard-working students that we have been blessed with at UW Milwaukee.

Panos Skordi  
Director of Undergraduate Actuarial Studies  
[skordi@uwm.edu](mailto:skordi@uwm.edu)

# Faculty



## **Panos Skordi, FIA, FCAS, MAAA, PhD**

### ***Actuarial Science Undergraduate Director; Associate Clinical Professor***

Panos is an Associate Professor of Actuarial Science at UWM and a fully credentialed fellow of the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries and the Casualty Actuarial Society. He has taught Data Analytics, Risk Management and Actuarial Science at both the undergraduate and graduate levels at California State University, Chapman University, UC Santa Barbara and UCLA. Panos has received numerous excellence in teaching awards and mentoring and advising awards. Professor Skordi received his PhD from Curtin University in Perth Australia. He has developed several classes and is active in helping students with internships and permanent jobs. In addition to his teaching and course development responsibilities, he has held roles as faculty advisor to

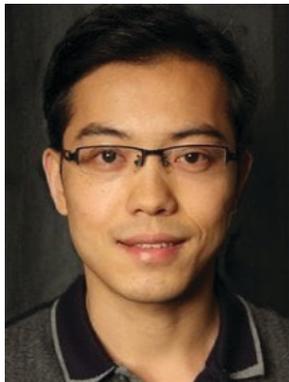
several university clubs including Actuarial, Real Estate and Latino students and has been chairperson of committees. Dr. Skordi's primary research interest is in developing the classroom environment in STEM classes. Before teaching, Dr. Skordi worked as an actuary in life insurance and pensions benefits. He later transitioned to the London Market working in marine insurance and then moving to commercial lines. He is still active in the professional arena working on a consulting basis.

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## **Vytaras Brazauskas, ASA, PhD**

### ***Associate Chair for Actuarial Science; Professor***

Vytaras Brazauskas is Professor and Associate Chair for Actuarial Science in the Department of Mathematical Sciences at UWM and an affiliate faculty member at the Northwestern Mutual Data Science Institute. He is an Associate of the Society of Actuaries, an Academic Correspondent of the Casualty Actuarial Society, and has served as President of the Milwaukee Chapter of the American Statistical Association. He holds a PhD in Mathematical Statistics from the University of Texas at Dallas and has written numerous peer-reviewed papers on insurance and reinsurance problems, including credibility, robust estimation of risk measures, and modeling loss data. His research program has been recognized by many grants from various actuarial organizations and awards such as the Variance Prize ("for the Best Paper in 2013") from the Casualty Actuarial Society.

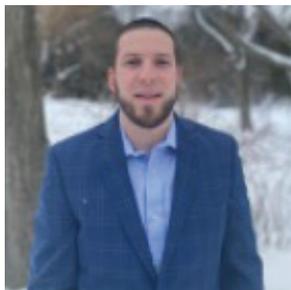


## **Wei Wei, ASA, PhD**

### ***Associate Professor***

Wei Wei is an associate professor in Actuarial Science. Before joining UWM in 2013, he received his PhD in Actuarial Science at the University of Waterloo (Canada). He is an Associate of Society of Actuaries and China Association of Actuaries. His research interests lie in the areas of actuarial science and quantitative risk management, as well as applied probability and operations research. Specifically, he works on the topics of optimal insurance design, dependence modeling, stochastic ordering, cyber risk management, optimal scheduling, and ruin theory.

# Advisory Board



## **Drake Menzia** *President of Advisory Board*

National General  
Actuarial Manager, Individual Products

Drake Menzia is a UW Milwaukee Alumni and is currently working as a health pricing actuary at National General an Allstate Company. He joined the company in 2012.

## **Taylor Gehrke** *FSA, CERA, MAAA*

Oliver Wyman  
Actuarial Consultant



## **Michelle Klein** *FSA, MAAA*

Milliman  
Actuary

Michelle is an actuary with the Chicago-Milwaukee office of Milliman. She joined the

firm in 2013.

## **Jessica O'Donnell** *FSA, MAAA*

Humana  
Associate Actuary

Jessica has been in the health industry for about five years.



## **Jason K. Sciborski** *FSA, MAAA*

Milliman  
Principal and Consulting Actuary

Jason joined Milliman in 2006.



## **Kelly S. Backes**

*FSA, MAAA*

Milliman  
Principal and Consulting Actuary

Kelly joined Milliman in 2014.



## **Charles Johnson** *FSA, CERA*

Northwestern Mutual  
Actuarial Consultant

## **Marlee Nichols**

*ASA*

Northwestern Mutual  
Actuarial Senior Specialist

Marlee graduated from UW-Madison in 2017 with a degree in Actuarial Science after transferring from UWM following her junior year. She is now part of the Actuarial Leadership Development Program at Northwestern Mutual and is currently on rotation to the Risk Selection Strategy Department. She recently passed her final FSA exam and is finishing up modules before receiving her FSA.



## **Kelsey Reinhard** *ASA, MAAA*

Ascension  
Actuarial Services Manager

## **Krystal Smuda ACAS**

Allstate  
Senior Actuarial Assistant

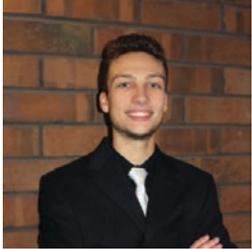
Krystal is a property/casualty actuary at Allstate. She joined the company in 2015 after graduating from UWM.



# UWM **Actuarial** CLUB and its Board

Fall 2020 has been a great semester for the Actuarial Club and the Actuarial Science program. Beginning last semester, Dr. Skordi became the new director and club advisor. His efforts in the little time he has been here have been tremendous. He has revamped multiple courses to better prepare students for the actuarial profession, resurrected the Advisory Board to better

collaborate with local employers, and has been extremely involved in the Actuarial Club's progression. The Actuarial Club has brought in speakers, banded together with clubs from other schools to create the Wisconsin Actuarial Collegiate Conference (a multiple school actuarial recruitment fair that debuted this Fall), set up study groups, communicated with club members on the importance of exam-taking and resume tips, and had a significant increase in club membership. We expect things to continue growing as the club finds ways to be beneficial to its members.



## **Sheldon Hess** *Club President*

I am a senior Actuarial Science major graduating in May 2021. I currently have two exams passed and will be sitting for my third in Spring. I work remotely

as an Actuarial Intern for Ascension. In my free time, I enjoy spending time with friends and family and being outside.

## **Jamal Jay** *VP of Company Relations*

I am currently a Junior majoring in Mathematics. I was born, raised, and continue to reside in the Greater Milwaukee Area. I work with J.P Morgan Chase Co.

as an associate banker, and I assist with research at Marquette University. I will be sitting for the FM exam in the first quarter of 2021.



## **Jada Morgan** *VP of Communications (President-Elect), Exam FM Coordinator*

I am a junior majoring in Actuarial Science with a minor in Economics. I was born on

the beautiful island of Jamaica, but I now reside in Milwaukee. I have recently passed Exam FM in Fall 2020, and I plan to sit Exam P in the coming Spring. I am also the Course Coordinator for Exam FM.

## **Makenzie Mroczenski** *VP of Membership*

I am a senior majoring in Actuarial Science with minors in Business and Economics and will be graduating in May 2021. I am from New Berlin, Wisc.,

and I am on the volleyball team at UWM. I have Exams FM and P passed and will be taking IFM in July. I work remotely as an Actuarial Intern for Wakely Consulting.



## **Hailey Huisman** *VP of Alumni Relations*

I am a sophomore majoring in Actuarial Science. I'm from Oshkosh, Wisc. I love to enjoy the outdoors and working out in my free time. I am currently studying

for FM and plan to sit for it in the upcoming Spring.

## **Matthew Carlsen** *VP of Social Media*

I am a Freshman majoring in Actuarial Science and Economics.

I am from Waukesha, Wisc., and went to Waukesha West High School. I plan on taking FM next year. Currently, I am an economics tutor at UWM.



## **Connor Angeli** *VP of Education*

I am a Junior majoring in Actuarial Science. I passed exam FM in May 2020 and exam P in January 2021. I attended high school in Shawano, Wisc. I am also a tutor for calculus here at UWM.

## Featured Alum



**Krystal Smuda**  
*ACAS from Allstate*

I graduated from UWM in 2015 with a degree in Actuarial Science. Initially, I was undecided about my major until I read more about Actuarial Science and spoke to Professor Yang Ho. Since it was only a four-year degree, math-related, great salary, and exceptional job market, it was an easy decision. I started sitting for exams in my Sophomore year. After some fails and passes, I graduated with 3.5 exams passed (the .5 comes from a 2-part exam that has since been replaced in the exam process.) In the winter of my Junior year through graduation, I interned at Assurant Health. Working at Assurant Health was a great experience - learning about the insurance industries, programming, and working with other actuaries.

After graduation, I started a full-time position at Allstate in pricing auto and home insurance products. I have continued to take exams and received the Associate of the Casualty Actuarial Society designation in 2018. I am still employed with Allstate in pricing, working on the auto modeling team.

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## Featured Student



**Matthew Drobka**  
*Junior*

My name is Matthew Drobka, and I am a Junior at UWM. I decided to come to UWM for the actuarial science department because it is close to home where I can still live and drive to school if I need to. I also really liked the campus when I toured it when I was a senior in high school. I decided to choose actuarial science as my major because I found out that in high school I really enjoyed my math classes. So much so that I would take two math classes at a time to get ahead in my math education. I took some accounting classes because I had initially thought about accounting, but after a few classes, I realized that it was not for me. Then I did a shadow at Milliman in Brookfield, and that is where I developed my interest and liking of what actuaries do. I also found that I really enjoyed the Property and Casualty side of the actuarial career from the shadow experience. This is what set me on my path to becoming an actuary.



*UWM - one of only 17 U.S. universities recognized as a Center of Actuarial Excellence!*

# Testimonials from Employers

One may get an idea about the quality of our graduates and their high level of competence by the comments they consistently receive from their employers, such as the following:

“These actuarial analysts have sophisticated technical skills, demonstrate strong professionalism, and are on track to achieving Associate status within the Society of Actuaries. Their ability to solve complex business problems and consult...leaders is a testament to the excellent educational foundation they established at UWM.”

“We are happy to have graduates of the UW-Milwaukee actuarial science program currently...All are fellows of the Society of Actuaries (FSA) and members of the American Academy of Actuaries (MAAA). . . . .they are seasoned Principals and shareholders in our practice. . . .”

“. . . the education received at UWM has helped [some of our actuaries] to be successful here... They are Fellows of the Society of Actuaries, having achieved the designation within several years of graduation and faster than the SOA average. They’ve been promoted to a level that places them in the top 10% of our employees, having achieved this rank at a young age.”

“. . . we have hired UWM actuarial science graduates that currently work in our Milwaukee, Wisc., health practice... We attend UWM’s annual career fair with the intention of hiring an intern and/or entry-level candidates. We appreciate the opportunity to recruit from a high quality and local actuarial science program that has continuously produced strong students that come from a diverse background with unique skills.”

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## Fundraising

To achieve our goal of producing the best actuaries of the future, we encourage our students to start professional exams early and participate in professional development seminars.

Funding is required to enable our students to pay the costs of taking the professional examinations. The costs are relatively small for working professionals but can be debilitating for some students.

To help us reach our goals you can donate on-line: [www.give.uwm.edu/actuarial-science](http://www.give.uwm.edu/actuarial-science)  
Alternately, you can fill out the form below and donate by mail.

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Degree:  BA  Master’s  PhD Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: UWM Office of Development – Attn: Leslie Horn, PO Box 413, Milwaukee, WI 53201-0413

*Your gift is tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.*

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Check payable to the **UWM Foundation**

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I wish my gift to be anonymous.

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