

WHITEWATER

The University of Wisconsin-Whitewater Magazine • Spring 2026



Our Stories, Our Future:

A Shared Legacy of Impact



UW-Whitewater has been the defining backdrop of our lives and careers. My journey here began as a student, too, earning my bachelor's degree in 2005, and later completing my MBA in 2021. Professionally, I have been part of this community for over 15 years, starting as a fundraiser in 2010 and eventually stepping into the role of Foundation President in 2023. These dual perspectives, as both a proud alumna and a leader, have given me a profound appreciation for the mission we serve and the generosity that makes it possible.

At the heart of our work today is the **"Our Stories, Our Future"** Campaign. This historic \$50 million initiative is rooted in the belief that every Warhawk has a unique story and that by coming together, we ensure the chapters yet to be written are the most impactful. From revitalizing campus infrastructure to expanding critical scholarships, this campaign is the engine driving our progress across both the Whitewater and Rock County campuses.

The true success of "Our Stories, Our Future" is found in the tangible impact on our students' lives. Because of your support, we can provide the resources our students need to excel both in and out of the classroom. Whether it is through innovative research, career-shaping experiences, or the financial peace of mind that allows a student to focus on their studies, your generosity creates a ripple effect of success that extends far beyond graduation. We are not just funding programs; we are investing in the leaders and innovators of tomorrow.

What makes the Warhawk family truly special is the spirit of Warhawk Bold that connects us all. This shared identity transcends graduation years and geographic distances. Our alumni and partners are the cornerstone of everything we achieve. Your engagement in the campaign ensures that the legacy of excellence we all cherish continues to thrive.

Thank you for being a vital part of our story. Together, we are ensuring that the future of UW-Whitewater is stronger than ever.

With gratitude,

Katie Kuznacic '05, MBA '21

President, UW-Whitewater Foundation

Table of Contents

- 4** Our Bold Mission in Action:
A Message from Chancellor Corey A. King
- 13** University Health and Counseling Services
Strengthens Student Mental Health Care
- 14** Writing the Next Chapter Together:
An Update on Our Stories, Our Future
- 20** Founders Day Award Recipients 2026

Editor: Cici Woods

Designer: Kristin Mitchell Design, Inc.

Contributions by University Marketing and Communications

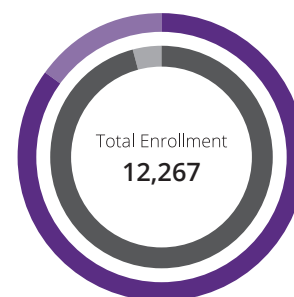
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Fall 2025 Enrollment



- Undergraduate - 10,743
- Graduate - 1,524
- Whitewater Campus - 11,424
- Rock County Campus - 843

Warhawk Strong

110,595
alumni

29%
lifetime donors

75 countries represented

Top Alumni Residences

Wisconsin
79,554

Illinois
8,526

Florida
2,629

International
1,914

UW-Whitewater Foundation, Inc. 2024-25 Financial Impact

\$3,190,050
total support

\$1,474,674
direct scholarship support

\$1,715,376
faculty, staff, and
other support

Staff Spotlight



While many students begin their college journey with dozens of tours and recruitment emails, Lauree Miller's started with a simple feeling of belonging. Despite never having set foot on campus, she felt a pull to the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, noting that "it seemed to make sense." With guidance from her high school civics teacher, she applied to that single school and was accepted — a choice that would begin a decades-long relationship and a multi-generational legacy.

Though she arrived for academics, Miller's competitive spirit led her to the basketball court and the track team. Even after undergoing ACL reconstruction on both knees, her commitment to the Warhawk community never wavered. After graduating with a degree in finance in 1988 and a brief stint in the private sector, she felt the pull of campus once more. She returned to the university, first managing a convenience store in the University Center, and later joining the UW-Whitewater Foundation, balancing her career with raising a family alongside her husband, Jeff Miller, MEPD '92.

Today, Lauree serves as the Director of Advancement Services and Chief Operating Officer. Her journey from a walk-on student-athlete to a leader at the Foundation is a testament to the magnetic energy of the university. The Miller legacy now spans generations, with Lauree, Jeff, and two of their children holding degrees. Her grandchildren even attend daycare at the Children's Center on campus. Her journey is one that truly represents what it means to be a Warhawk for life. As Lauree puts it, "I am proud to be an alumna and to support the university alongside my team."

Our Bold Mission in Action

A Message from Chancellor Corey A. King



Alumni and friends, as I begin my fourth year as chancellor of this outstanding university, we continue to strengthen our mission of academic excellence, inclusivity, access and affordability. Here are a few recent highlights that speak to our success.



Chancellor Corey A. King takes his traditional onstage selfie with new students during a SOAR orientation session in the Hamilton Room of the University Center on June 11, 2025. (Photo/Craig Schreiner)

Enrollment Continues to Grow

We were thrilled to welcome more than 12,000 students to UW-Whitewater this year, including the largest freshman class in a decade at 2,459. This marks the third consecutive year of enrollment growth. At Warhawks SOAR, our orientation program, I get the opportunity to engage with incoming students and their families — and take a selfie or two.

A Leader as a First-Generation Student University

Every fall, we publicly celebrate our first-generation college students with an annual event. Pictured here is Kiara Rios, a psychology major from Kenosha who's a McNair Scholar, who delivered a powerful speech about her journey. As a fellow first-gen student, supporting this population is close to my heart. About 37% of Warhawks are the first in their families to pursue a college degree. By keeping costs affordable, by providing services like tutoring and financial literacy, and by embracing a culture of caring, we are helping first-gen students succeed and graduate. In fact, The Wall Street Journal recognizes UW-Whitewater as Wisconsin's top public university for social mobility.



From left, Megan Matuszeski, Tricia Clasen, Kara Sankey, Chancellor Corey A. King, Shar Hermanson, Kiefer Sullivan and Kennedy Heckel gather for a ribbon cutting at the Mercyhealth Medical Sciences Hub dedication at UW-Whitewater at Rock County on Oct. 22, 2025. (Photo/Craig Schreiner)

Academic Innovation, In-demand Careers and Strategic Partnerships

UW-Whitewater ensures our workforce is well-educated, robust and adaptable. At our Rock County campus, we held a ribbon cutting for the Mercyhealth Medical Sciences Hub, which expands access to healthcare education and serves a key need in Wisconsin and stateline communities for nurses, technicians, and other healthcare professionals. At the Whitewater campus, our comprehensive AI degree debuts this fall, integrating computer science, mathematics, psychology, and philosophy to help students build both the technical skills and interpersonal skills needed for cutting-edge careers in AI.

Our Graduates are Warhawk Bold

The energy at commencement is real and inspiring. It's an honor to preside over the ceremonies each semester. I have a tradition where I join hands in celebration with the final graduate to cross the stage. Our 110,000+ alumni are our legacy. Warhawk graduates are enjoying successful careers and making positive contributions across the world. With your continued support, we will keep that momentum going for generations to come.



Warhawks' artwork displayed at Korean art exhibition

Hands-on learning at UW-Whitewater recently translated into real-world recognition alongside world-class artists for one student and two alums.

Artists from South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Thailand, and the United States convened in Seoul, South Korea, in September for the 32nd Korea Jewelry Design Association Member Exhibition.

Liina Heikkinen, an art major from Madison, Wisconsin, was encouraged to exhibit her work by Teresa Faris, her professor and mentor. They selected Heikkinen's brooch, "Brain Waves," designed to represent anxiety, for display.

JJ Thomson '16 submitted "Placed here for a reason," a commentary on the experience of students placed in special education. Ger Xiong '17 explored his Hmong-American culture and family history through his piece, "Re/silience."

Turning Passions into Professions

Faris encourages students working with metals and jewelry to find their "authentic voice" and develop distinct themes in their work.

"Once people are able to reveal their authentic self, their unique visual vocabulary automatically follows," she said.

Xiong fell in love with metalsmithing and jewelry design after taking his first class.

"I don't think I would be where I am right now if I didn't go to UW-Whitewater," Xiong said. "The classes were a good size where students were able to connect and have mentors."

Thomson took a jewelry class as an elective and — like Xiong — switched to art with a metals and jewelry emphasis.

"I was really inspired, and my professor, Teresa Faris, was such an amazing instructor about conceptual jewelry and the art work, and (she) wanted her students to succeed," Thomson said.

Faris integrates professional practices — including networking, sales, writing, and photography — into classes to develop skills students need for success in the artistic world.

"When I went to grad school, I already understood my work, what I wanted to make, and what I was talking about," Thomson said.

While she completes her degree, Heikkinen, pictured, below, is gaining real-world experience through exhibitions and as president of Alloy, the metalsmithing student organization and small business on campus.

"It's really fun to work closely alongside people and let your work be known and sold," Heikkinen said.



Hired Before Graduation — Where Are They Now?

Choosing UW-Whitewater felt like the perfect blend of creativity, competition and community for Cally (Kopplin) Jacque.



The Aurora, Illinois, native arrived on campus with her major decided and a roster spot on the Warhawk volleyball team secured. Meeting her husband, Spencer, a 2015 UW-Whitewater finance graduate and former Warhawk football player, for the first time is a memory she said she revisits most.

Jacque earned a B.A. in art in 2015 and was hired before graduation. Her career spans across graphic design, marketing, retail, and agricultural technology — she is now thriving as an art director with Juris Digital, a digital marketing agency for law firms, and freelance graphic designer.

One of Jacque's career highlights came during her tenure working at Claire's, a jewelry and cosmetics retailer, when she was chosen to design a seasonal in-store campaign.

"It was a very full-circle moment," she said, noting that she'd gotten her ears pierced at Claire's as a kid.

Jacque attributes much of her professional success to people who supported her along the way, including former faculty member Kris Kranenburg and the Whitewater Advertising Association.

UW-Whitewater students produce ESPN broadcast



A total of 14 UW-Whitewater students had the opportunity to produce a nationally streamed broadcast for a powerhouse sports network. UWW-TV's production of the Warhawk football game against DePauw (Indiana) on Nov. 29, aired live on ESPN+.

Learn more about UWW-TV:



Joe Mabie '16, video production manager for UWW's University Housing and a UW-Whitewater alum, advised the students while managing ESPN requests.

UWW-TV, composed of two full-time professional staff and 18 student team members, produces approximately 60 events per academic year, including live sports, university special events, lectures and theatre productions.

UWW-TV collaborates with the Department of Communication — housed in the College of Arts and Communication — utilizing about 20 additional practicum students each semester for assistance. For each broadcast, students work together as announcers, directors, graphics, replay, and camera operators. The station is supported through University Housing to make sure hands-on learning occurs with the most updated technology available.

A path to opportunity — and a nursing degree

The Rock County campus gives a Janesville student the chance to study in her community and the faculty and staff support needed to be successful.

Janesville native Aliana Carrillo is a first-generation student on the UW-Whitewater at Rock County campus. In fall 2025, she found herself addressing officials from UW-Whitewater, Edgewood University, Mercyhealth and Forward Janesville who gathered to dedicate the Mercyhealth Medical Sciences Hub on campus. Carrillo, a scholarship recipient and TRIO student, talked about the path offered to her by the new medical and health programs on campus.

“Through my time here at URock, I’ve received so much support, ranging from faculty and staff interactions to student employment. Thanks to the Mercyhealth Sciences Hub, the Edgewood University collaboration, and UW-Whitewater-Rock County, myself and others have pathways to higher education and career opportunities within our community.”

Then a pre-nursing student, in January 2026 Carrillo joined the first spring cohort of four nursing students in the collaborative nursing program on the Rock County campus. It’s a jump in workload, she acknowledges — from four 2- to 3- credit classes to four full-credit classes plus clinical rotations — but she feels prepared.

“My anatomy and physiology, pathophysiology and microbiology classes really helped me to not only understand how diseases work in the body at the cellular level, but also to take that foundational knowledge into my nursing education.”

Carrillo has worked throughout her time on the Rock County campus, in the TRIO program, at the front desk of the Learning Support Center taking appointments for tutoring and advising, as a peer mentor and Hawksquad member, helping other students the way she was helped herself.

“Having small classes or getting help — whether in TRIO or in the Learning Support Center — was a better fit for me. I do better with smaller classes, with a better connection to the instructor.”

Carrillo plans to work in an ICU after receiving a bachelor’s degree in nursing and eventually become certified as a CRNA, or certified registered nurse anesthetist.



Find out more about the nursing program
on the Rock County campus.

Mercyhealth
MEDICAL SCIENCES HUB

Grads Who Excel — Where Are They Now?

A start at URock leads to an easy transition to the Whitewater campus, a bachelor’s degree — and making a name in the region.

Isaiah Janisch, who earned an associate degree on the Rock County campus in 2018 followed by a B.S. in English—creative writing and a minor in computer science at UW-Whitewater 2021, is a writer and poet from Evansville.



Janisch recently did a reading at the Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets’ 40th annual Winter Festival of Poetry in Madison.

Janisch’s work has been featured in numerous literary journals, including the Wisconsin Poets’ Calendar, UW-Rock County’s Rock River Review, and UW-Whitewater’s The Muse. Besides writing, Janisch worked as an editor for the Rock River Review and Landward poetry radio show. Janisch also founded @plaza.of.poetry, an online poem collection that explores liminality through poetry.

Intercollegiate athletics returns to URock

Women’s volleyball and men’s soccer compete at the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) level. Go Warhawks!

Members of the men’s soccer team appeared at New Student Welcome Day on the Rock County campus, soliciting new players and raising awareness for the new team. Intercollegiate athletics returned to UW-Whitewater at Rock County in 2023, with women’s volleyball and men’s soccer each competing at the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) level. The NJCAA includes two-year colleges from around the nation — nearly 60,000 student-athletes compete across 28 sports. URock hopes to add more competitive sports in the future.



Powered by Tradition:

A Year of Warhawk Excellence

Over the last year, UW-Whitewater Athletics has once again demonstrated what it means to be a Warhawk — pairing elite competition with excellence in the classroom and strengthening a tradition that alumni across generations proudly share.

From championship celebrations last spring to another wave of postseason appearances this fall and winter, the Warhawks have continued to elevate the standard in NCAA Division III.



A Spring to Remember

The headline moment of the year came on the diamond. Under head coach John Vodenich '92, MBA '94, Warhawk baseball captured its third national championship, delivering one of the most dominant performances in NCAA Division III World Series history. The Warhawks shattered program, national and championship records on their way to the title, showcasing the program's depth, preparation and relentless competitiveness.

The softball team continued its remarkable tradition of consistency. UW-Whitewater made its league-leading 25th appearance in the NCAA Tournament and advanced to the Super Regional.

Meanwhile, Warhawk men's and women's outdoor track and field athletes made their mark on the national stage, collecting 15 All-America honors at the NCAA Outdoor Championships.

Fall Momentum Builds

As the calendar turned, success carried into the fall.

Volleyball returned to NCAA action for the 36th time. Anchored by All-Americans Abbie Dix and Aubrie Krzus, the Warhawks proved they remain a fixture on the national stage.

Football battled through one of the country's most competitive conferences, becoming one of four Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference teams to earn a bid to the NCAA playoffs — the first time in Division III football history a single league accomplished that feat.

Men's cross country made its fifth consecutive appearance at the NCAA Division III Championship, a mark of sustained program stability and national relevance.

Led by All-American Cooper Re, the Warhawk men's soccer team made its fifth NCAA appearance under head coach Tony Guinn's leadership. The team hosted the first and second rounds of the NCAA Division III Championship and continued to raise expectations for the program.





Winter Success

The men's and women's basketball teams each finished strong seasons with trips to the second round of the NCAA Tournament. The Warhawk men claimed the WIAC regular season title for the first time since 2015, while the women continued their sustained excellence with a 10th straight NCAA berth.

Five Warhawk wrestlers punched their ticket to the NCAA Championship, and three-time All-American Dominik Mallinder finished as the national runner-up at 149 pounds. Sam Vargas of the UW-Whitewater men's track and field program became a three-time All-American after placing eighth the 60-meter dash at the NCAA Indoor Championships during the same weekend.

Gymnastics finished as runner-up at the conference meet and placed fifth at the 2026 National Collegiate Gymnastics Association Championship on March 20.

Excellence Beyond Competition

While championships and national rankings headline the year, Warhawk success extends far beyond competition.

For the first time in university history, every UW-Whitewater athletic program recorded a team grade point average of 3.0 or higher during the 2024-25 academic year. More than 80 student-athletes earned Chancellor Scholar-Athlete honors, and dozens more were recognized on Academic All-District and Academic All-America teams.

For alumni and friends, the message is clear: the Warhawk standard remains strong. Today's student-athletes are winning championships while reinforcing the academic excellence of UW-Whitewater. Powered by Tradition is more than a slogan — it reflects decades of success, support, and pride that continue to drive today's achievements and inspire future Warhawks.

University Health and Counseling Services Strengthens Student Mental Health Care

As the mental health needs of today's students continue to evolve, University Health and Counseling Services continues to innovate, expand, and adapt to ensure access to care throughout students' time at the university. Through accessible, high-quality physical and mental health services, UHCS supports student success and well being while fostering emotional, academic, social, and personal development. This wellness-centered approach reflects a commitment to removing barriers to care and empowering students to thrive during and beyond their college years.

Individual counseling remains the primary focus of counseling services at UHCS. All students are eligible to receive counseling at no cost, with average wait times of less than one week, and individual sessions account for the majority of counseling visits each year. During the 2024–2025 academic year, UHCS provided 4,341 counseling visits to UW-Whitewater students. According to the 2025 UWW Counseling Impact Assessment Report, 87% of UHCS clients reported improvement on the concerns that brought them to counseling. UHCS also provides crisis support for students experiencing immediate concerns and helps connect them with appropriate campus or community resources. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, UHCS has maintained a hybrid model of care, allowing students to meet with counselors in person and virtually.

In 2023–24, UHCS launched ADHD assessment services to meet a growing need on campus as more students connected with the Center for Students with Disabilities seeking evaluation and support for neurodivergent learning and attention concerns. The initial goal was 60 assessments in the first year, a benchmark that was met.

These initiatives represent just a portion of the work underway to support student well being. Through integrated clinical care, prevention, education, and partnerships, UHCS strengthens both immediate access to services and long-term campus capacity to support mental health. This coordinated approach ensures students have the resources they need to succeed academically, grow personally, and remain connected to a supportive community.



Writing the Next Chapter Together:

An Update on “Our Stories, Our Future” Campaign

Since we officially launched the “Our Stories, Our Future” Campaign, the energy across the Warhawk community has been nothing short of electric. We shared a vision of what is possible when we unite to support the next generation of students, and today, that momentum has only intensified. This campaign is the most ambitious in UW-Whitewater’s 157-year history, and because of your belief in this institution, we are moving closer to our \$50 million goal every single day.

This campaign has never been just about the dollars; it is about the lives those dollars transform.

The theme, “Our Stories, Our Future,” reflects the reality that every scholarship awarded and every facility upgraded creates a ripple effect. Whether it is a first-generation student receiving the support they need to stay in school or a faculty member having the resources to lead a breakthrough research project, these individual stories are the building blocks of our collective future. We are not just funding a university; we are fueling the aspirations of the “Warhawk Bold.”

Our progress to date is a testament to the strength of the Warhawk family.

Having already surpassed the halfway mark of our fundraising goal, we are seeing the tangible impact of your generosity across both the Whitewater and Rock County campuses. These funds are already being put to work, supporting critical areas such as student scholarships, faculty development, campus enhancement projects, and vital renovations. Each gift ensures that UW-Whitewater remains a place where students can discover their calling.

One of the most rewarding aspects of leading this campaign has been witnessing the power of affinity groups. From the King/Chávez Scholars Alumni Council to our various athletic and academic cohorts, Warhawks are coming together to mentor, advocate, and give back to the programs that shaped them. We encourage all alumni to either join or create an affinity group to stay closely connected to our great university. These connections prove that the UW-Whitewater experience doesn’t end at graduation; it evolves into a lifelong commitment to excellence and mutual support.



As we look toward the future, we celebrate the traditions of philanthropy that continue to define our culture. Annual landmarks like **Warhawks Give** and **Giving Tuesday** have become vital moments where our community unites for a common purpose.

These traditions are more than just fundraising drives; they are high-energy celebrations of our shared spirit, demonstrating the power of collective action to provide for UW-Whitewater’s needs.

Beyond these hallmark events, we are seeing a growing movement toward sustained support through **recurring gifts**. By choosing to give on a regular basis, many alumni and friends are providing a reliable foundation for our students’ success. This steady commitment allows the university to plan for the future with confidence, knowing that the “Warhawk family” is standing behind us every month of the year. Whether it’s a monthly contribution or a one-time gift, every act of generosity builds toward our shared goal.

Our legacy is built on the participation of many. Every contribution serves as a vote of confidence in our students’ potential and an investment in the Warhawk Bold spirit that has flourished since our founding in 1868. Whether you are a regular donor or looking to make your first gift, this is a moment to stand up and be counted as part of the story we are writing together. Your involvement sends a powerful message that the UW-Whitewater legacy is thriving and evolving.

We are deeply grateful for your dedication and collaboration. Every conversation we have with alumni and friends reinforces our belief that UW-Whitewater is uniquely positioned to soar even higher. Thank you for being a vital part of this success and for your unwavering commitment to making our university stronger for the next 150 years and beyond. We look forward to seeing the incredible impact we will continue to make together through these enduring traditions of giving.

John '82 and Wendy Buckley
Campaign Co-Chairs

Our Stories
our Future
A Campaign for UW-Whitewater

\$32.9 million raised

of our \$50 million goal

20,528 gifts

as of 2.28.26



Smart Giving Through Your IRA

Turning Your Required Minimum Distribution Into Meaningful Impact

If you are age 73 or older, you are required to take a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) each year from your traditional IRA. While these withdrawals are mandatory, they also present a meaningful opportunity to support the causes you care about — like the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. Although RMDs do not begin until age 73, individuals age 70½ and older are eligible to make a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD). Through a QCD, you may direct up to \$111,000 per year from your IRA to a qualified charitable organization, including the UWW Foundation. Once you reach age 73, a QCD can count toward satisfying your Required Minimum Distribution.

When a QCD is made directly from your IRA provider to the Foundation, it can count toward satisfying your Required Minimum Distribution and may be excluded from your taxable income. Because the funds transfer directly, the distribution is not treated as taxable income to you — potentially reducing your overall tax burden while maximizing your philanthropic impact.

An IRA gift can support the areas of campus that matter most to you while advancing UW-Whitewater's strategic priorities.

Whether you are passionate about expanding scholarship access, strengthening student-athlete experiences, supporting first-generation students, enhancing mental health and wellness services, or investing in innovative academic programs that prepare Warhawks for today's workforce, your gift makes a direct and measurable difference. IRA distributions can also be used to establish or grow an endowed fund, creating lasting support for students and programs for generations to come.

As UW-Whitewater continues to focus on increasing access, enhancing student retention and graduation outcomes, and preparing graduates for meaningful careers, philanthropic support plays a critical role. By directing your RMD to support these priorities, you help ensure lasting opportunities for current and future Warhawks.

We encourage you to consult your financial advisor to determine whether a QCD is right for you. We would be honored to help you explore how your giving through an IRA can strengthen UW-Whitewater's future. Contact us to learn more.

Kiefer Sullivan

Executive Director of Major Gifts and Corporate Sponsorships
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Investing in Opportunity:

Peter Glerum '90 Pays His Success Forward



Peter H. Glerum has always believed that success means more when it is shared. As he steps into retirement and his new role as Emeritus Partner, he reflects on his 20-year career at Castlelake in Minneapolis — a career shaped by disciplined decision-making, long-term strategy, and the foundations built in UW-Whitewater classrooms.

Pete's story, however, extends far beyond his professional achievements. A proud supporter of UW-Whitewater, he gives back to the institution that helped launch his career. As a member of the Foundation Board, he volunteers his time and expertise to strengthen the university's future. For him, service is not an obligation but an investment.

Remembering what it felt like to be a student filled with ambition and uncertainty, Pete understands that opportunity is not evenly distributed. That insight inspired him to create and support the Finance Program Scholarship, aimed at removing financial barriers for hardworking students. "At its core, inclusivity creates a more robust decision-making process," he says — an idea that guides both his philanthropy and his professional philosophy.

What makes Pete's commitment remarkable is not only the financial contribution but the continuity of it. He doesn't simply write a check; he stays engaged. He returns to campus to speak in classrooms and to student organizations. He acts as a mentor to select students each year. He connects students to industry experts and encourages them to think long term. In many ways, his role mirrors his professional life — identifying opportunity, nurturing growth, and believing in the power of disciplined investment.

Pete also welcomes UW-Whitewater's Financial Management Association students to Castlelake, offering an inside look at asset management through case studies, strategy discussions, and candid career conversations. For many, it is their first glimpse into the investment world. For Pete, it is a chance to show that a future in finance is within reach.

In Minneapolis, Pete helps manage capital. In Whitewater, he helps build futures — proving that the most meaningful returns are measured not in dollars, but in opportunity.



Turning trends into best practices

AI and virtual reality are shaping the next generation of teaching at UW-Whitewater.

In early December 2025, Jessica Patterson, a math education major from Glen Haven, appeared with Jon Spike, special assistant to the provost for artificial intelligence, and Ozgul Kartal, associate professor of curriculum and instruction, to answer questions from the Universities of Wisconsin Board of Regents, who were meeting on the UW-Whitewater campus.

Patterson had just participated in a demonstration in front of the regents — using virtual reality and artificial intelligence to deliver a math teaching lesson in real time to a virtual character named Damien, who struggled with the concept of ratios. In the demonstration, which took place in a virtual classroom using a virtual whiteboard, Patterson patiently prompted Damien in various ways to rethink assumptions about ratios and eventually find the correct answer.

“Virtual reality and AI are already being used at UW-Whitewater to allow students to practice communication, instructional strategies and decision-making in real time, with opportunities to pause, refine and reflect on their approach,” said Interim Provost Robin Fox as she introduced the demonstration.

“This is especially powerful in math education, where using AI helps teachers respond to misconceptions, explain abstract concepts, and build student engagement — all skills that benefit from repetition in low-stakes practice.”

After the demonstration, Regent A. Rai asked Patterson, “What was the experience like, and do you see yourself applying this in your classroom one day?”

“I found this learning helpful for me as I’ve developed as a person and I’ve worked toward becoming a teacher,” said Patterson. “It allowed me to go beyond the classroom. It allows me to think more critically and question students instead of just giving them answers. It’s been a change of mind.”

Patterson decided she wanted to become a teacher during COVID-19, when she helped her three younger siblings with their schoolwork and her parents struggled with helping her youngest sister with math. Patterson decided she could step in and help — the same can-do attitude and curiosity that she later brought to the VR simulation.

“It’s a cool way to use technology and have an experience like that. The fact that it was a chance for me to practice what we discussed in the classroom in a real-life setting — It’s not something we get to do every day.”

Grads Who Excel — Where Are They Now?

An educator inspired to create opportunities for others.



Randy Howard, who earned a BSE in physical education with an emphasis in health, human performance, and recreation in 2018, excels as sports director at the YMCA of Greater Waukesha County. He also serves as the city director for Pro Skills Basketball, where he manages all program logistics while ensuring youth have the best possible experience. Beyond skill development, he is passionate about teaching leadership both on and off the court — his mission is that every child has an opportunity to play.

“My passion is working with kids. That’s my ‘why’ — I am driven to give them a voice, to better understand what they want to see, grow them as leaders, and expose them to life lessons.”

Howard came to UW-Whitewater to become a teacher but soon found out that he would have to speak in front of a class — he was not a fan of public speaking — which prompted a change in major to physical education. He’s since grown into a confident speaker, recently addressing an audience of 465 people about stepping into leadership within the YMCA movement and encouraging others to pursue a similar path.

As a coach and mentor he still seeks to meaningfully connect with youth.

“Oftentimes, when we create programs, we forget pre-teens and teens. I know how to connect to that population — I feel for that demographic as a middle child. I often ask them, ‘What do you want to be when you grow up? What’s your plan B?’ It’s getting them to see the bigger picture.”



UW-Whitewater places 156 student teachers in the region

Setting students up for real-world success as they transition to their professional roles.



A total of 156 students from UW-Whitewater are representing the university as student teachers at schools in Wisconsin, Illinois, and other neighboring states during the 2026 spring semester. Students placed in field experiences are majoring in all aspects of education — from music and art to history, language arts, English literature, business, early childhood and special education.

To find out more about the simulation, watch the YouTube recording of the Board of Regents presentation via the QR code at left. The simulation begins at the 1 hour, 34 minute mark.



UW-Whitewater Founders Day 2026 Award Recipients

Six individuals who have achieved exceptional professional success or have made significant contributions to the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater are being honored as the university proudly celebrates its 158th anniversary.

The 2026 class of award honorees include a recent graduate who is both a senior leader in education and an acclaimed DJ, an avid supporter who was meaningfully involved in the recent release of the campus literary journal “Either/Or,” and an alum whose service to Whitewater — from board membership on the foundation to significant donations to support of student success to showing up to events big and small to help in any way needed — is being celebrated.

The awards were presented at the Founders Day Celebration, held at UW-Whitewater on Saturday, April 18, 2026.



This year’s outstanding recent alum is **Kyree Brooks**, who earned a BSE in physical education in 2017. After earning a master’s degree in rehabilitation psychology and special education at UW-Madison in 2019, he has worked at the Madison Metropolitan and Sun Prairie school districts and now serves as assistant principal of the Milwaukee Academy of Science. He is also a music producer and co-owner of DJ Ree Maniac Entertainment Services. Both professions benefit from his undeniable creativity and positivity.



UW-Whitewater is also honoring two distinguished alumni for their professional achievement. **Maysee Yang Herr**, who earned a B.A. in psychology in 1998, has had a decades-long career involving education, consulting and leadership roles as well as the co-creation of a Hmong language and culture program for youth called Camp Phoojywg-Friend in Central Wisconsin. In addition to earning a master’s degree in educational psychology and a doctorate in education and curriculum studies and teaching at UW-Stevens Point, she was the CEO of the Hmong Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce from 2019-2026.



Also receiving the Distinguished Alumni Award for Professional Achievement is **Anthony Prater**. Prater, who earned a bachelor’s degree in political science in 1980, co-founded Verity Medical, Inc., which grew rapidly and achieved a \$10 million revenue run rate within a decade of its founding. That company was ultimately sold to Examworks, Inc. and continues to operate today. Prater’s professional achievements also include co-founding and serving as a past president of the Wisconsin Worker’s Compensation Forum, which is an education-focused organization that supports industry professionals. On campus, he funds the Prater Family Scholarship, which is available to students majoring in the College of Letters and Sciences, and is a frequent class speaker for the management department in the College of Business and Economics.



Receiving the Distinguished Alumni Award for Community/Regional Service is **Kurt D. Rose**. Rose, who earned a bachelor’s degree in speech with an emphasis in organizational communications in 2009 and a Master of Science in occupational and environmental safety and health in 2019, has held myriad HR roles and currently serves as a deputy human resources director with the City of Madison. Channeling a strong sense of service instilled by his family, who are all public servants, and fueled by his time on campus, he has been deeply involved with Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, incorporated, serving in many leadership roles, and returns to campus frequently to speak, guest lecture and work with students.



Denny Waldera is this year’s recipient of the Distinguished Alumni Award for Service to UW-Whitewater. After earning a Bachelor of Business Administration in 1970 and a combined MBA and J.D. from Northwestern, Waldera carved out a distinguished career in strategic marketing, at Procter & Gamble and then in consulting companies he helped found and lead, before retiring in 2001. Since then, he has forged new ties on campus, serving in various roles on the UW-Whitewater Foundation Board of Directors, being a major donor to the Warhawks Give Fund and other student success-focused efforts, and actively supporting students in the Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity as a brother.



The recipient of the S.A. White Award for Contributions to UW-Whitewater is **Mary C. Rowin**. Rowin and her husband Roger L. Rowin, who earned a bachelor’s degree in history in 1967 with minors in economics, English literature and political science, have made significant contributions to UW-Whitewater through endowments and supporting new initiatives. Since his passing in 2021, Rowin has been working to continue her husband’s legacy through the David W. Adamany Scholarship Endowment, the Roger L. and Mary C. Rowin Faculty Endowment, and providing substantial support to give the new literary journal “Either/Or” a proper launch and a solid foundation as it grows on the campus.

“This year’s award recipients exemplify the very best of Warhawk Bold — distinguished in their professions and deeply committed to their communities,” said Chancellor Corey A. King. “UW-Whitewater continues to cultivate graduates who lead, inspire, and make a meaningful impact. It is a tremendous honor to recognize and celebrate these outstanding Warhawks.”

“We could not be more proud of this exceptional group of honorees, whose dedication to their communities, to UW-Whitewater, and to student success shines so brightly,” said Amy Oeding ’90, executive director of alumni relations and annual giving. “Their remarkable accomplishments and unwavering commitment to service truly embody the spirit and strength of the Warhawk family.”

Read full awardee stories at www.edu/alumni/awards2026

Nearly 5,000 Strong:

CoBE embraces enrollment growth

The numbers tell a remarkable story: 5,000+ students chose the College of Business and Economics this fall semester: a nearly 10% surge in undergraduate enrollment that's reshaping what it means to be Wisconsin's largest business school. While enrollment challenges persist across higher education, CoBE added 400+ new undergraduates this year alone.

"Every one of these students represents an investment in Wisconsin's economic future," says Dean Paul Ambrose. "They're choosing CoBE because we deliver what matters: smaller classes, no TAs, engaged faculty, and championship-caliber student organizations that win at the national level."

The growth also reflects strategic program innovation that's become CoBE's hallmark. The college recently launched an online banking emphasis targeting critical workforce needs in Wisconsin's financial sector, a new Marketing AI certificate for undergraduates and a graduate certificate in Digital Marketing and AI.

What makes this enrollment surge particularly meaningful? It comes as The Wall Street Journal recognized UW-Whitewater as the best public university in Wisconsin for both student experience and social mobility for the second straight year. CoBE students benefit from this vibrant campus ecosystem while gaining access to world-class credentials — AACSB accreditation in both business and accounting, held by less than 1% of schools worldwide, plus membership in the European Foundation for Management Development, shared by only 27 U.S. institutions.

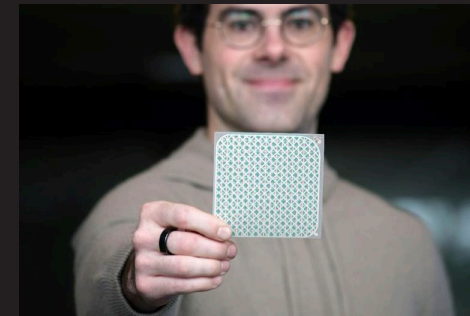
Families start a campus tour with information and an opportunity for questions in a lecture hall in Hyland Hall on a Preview Day tour. (UW-Whitewater photo/Craig Schreiner)



Grads Who Excel — Where Are They Now?

From Warhawk to Global Innovator. Joe Scanlin '12 Takes Smart Building Company to the World Stage

Earlier this year Joe Scanlin was having a conversation with CoBE faculty about his business ideas, but this time he wasn't taking notes as a student — he was sharing exciting news as an alumnus. The 2012 CoBE graduate had just sold his company, Scanalytics, to East West Manufacturing, a global technology leader backed by the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation.



Joe Scanlin ('12) shown holding a piece of his patented smart flooring system that captures every footstep, every movement, every pattern; invisibly, anonymously, continuously.

As a management major, Scanlin won the competitive Launchpad Scholar Award in 2011 — a grant reserved for students with exceptional entrepreneurial drive and academic excellence. That seed funding helped launch Scanalytics, which pioneered smart flooring technology that transforms buildings into intelligent systems capable of real-time tracking, space optimization, and enhanced safety.

The acquisition underscores the growing recognition of smart building technology as essential infrastructure for the AI-driven future. As Scanlin explained, "Buildings represent the largest, most expensive computers we never instrumented." His technology creates the measurement layer that makes physical spaces readable to software and AI systems.

Scanlin's technology will scale globally through East West's manufacturing and distribution network across seven countries — yet another example of how Warhawk innovation impacts the world.

Did You Know?

Face-to-Face MBA Launches Fall 2026

CoBE is relaunching a face-to-face evening MBA program in Fall 2026, ideal for working professionals interested in on-campus learning. Classes meet just once weekly from 5:30-8 p.m., with International Business or Management emphases available. **Learn more:** www.edu/cobe

Marketing Dominance Continues

For as long as today's teens (prospective undergraduate students) have been in grade school, CoBE marketing students have claimed the American Marketing Association's National Chapter of the Year award. In fact, they have claimed this title 21 times and are on a 14-year consecutive winning streak. This unprecedented accomplishment cements CoBE's marketing program as one of the nation's elite and helps explain why marketing remains one of campus's largest majors year after year.



UWW Enactus was Team USA at World Cup in Thailand

This year more than two dozen UWW students and faculty traveled to Bangkok, Thailand as U.S. National Champions to compete in the ENACTUS World Cup (ENTrepreneurial ACTION for others creates a better world for US all). The group which has chapters in 33 countries and more than 1000+ campus programs is an official student organization of CoBE but has students in majors across campus. Congratulations, Warhawks!



A photo captures the moment the UWW-Whitewater Enactus Chapter wins the 2025 National Championship: next stop? Thailand.



Warhawk Q&A:

Learn more about our new AI major

Whitewater Magazine discussed the university's new Bachelor of Science in Artificial Intelligence degree program with faculty members in the department of computer science. The AI major is scheduled to launch this fall.

What was the motivation behind creating an AI major at UW-Whitewater?

Zach Oster, associate professor and department chair: "We started to see more job postings for AI. We have the people and resources in place where we could offer a really high-quality, in-depth AI major to prepare students for these really demanding and high-paying jobs ... it was not an overnight decision."

AI is interdisciplinary. How does the curriculum reflect that?

Hien Nguyen, professor: "We require a psychology course, we have an ethics course ... we have political science and psychology. It's highly interdisciplinary from a course design point of view."

How are ethics and real-world impact addressed?

Max Gatyas, assistant professor, philosophy and religious studies: "I study ethics, which is concerned with what makes things valuable, and I don't think we can get a sense of whether artificial intelligence is valuable or to the extent to which it is valuable unless we ask these deeper questions — what it is that makes something valuable in the first place."

Sana Awan, assistant professor: "Ethical AI is woven throughout the curriculum. Students will encounter it in multiple contexts. For example, my own work on poisoning attacks illustrates how AI systems can be manipulated."

Lopamudra Mukherjee, associate professor: "Even though until now we did not have an AI major, when we had our grad students presenting projects, most of them would choose an AI-based project. In most cases, they try to choose a project that has some kind of real-world impact, either developing an app or creating something that has not been out there."

How can UWW students help businesses?

ZO: "Students are going to have the deep knowledge about how AI works and also that other context from just knowing a bit about the world and about these other areas that they can help these organizations."

HN: "If they can reach out to us, and we can have our students work on their problems, it would be a win-win."

**Would you like to connect with faculty about how students in the AI major can help your organization or business?
Contact Zach Oster at osterz@uww.edu.**

Learn more about
the AI major:



Grads Who Excel — Where Are They Now?

UW-Whitewater feels a lot like home for Robyn (Moe) McGinnis.



From nearby Elkhorn, McGinnis cherished the relationships she made at the university leading up to her graduation in 2015 with a B.S. in liberal studies. She was hired before graduation as a catering and conference sales manager at The Abbey Resort in Fontana, Wisconsin.

"There was a good sense of community through social activities, class and studying," she said. "It wasn't a far fetch to reach out and organize study groups or to reach out to a professor — I didn't feel like a number."

McGinnis had the opportunity to build her expertise through a course of study built around her interests and career goals.

"Liberal studies is a very general major where you can pick what you can focus on," she said. "I did business first, then biology, and then switched to something general."

After starting her career in event management, McGinnis switched to project management, and now works at Northwestern Mutual. She is grateful for the opportunity to enjoy a life she never envisioned for herself.

"You don't have to follow the status quo," McGinnis said.

Students support research through grants

Nearly 30 Warhawks earned grants to conduct undergraduate research in 2025-26.

Academic Year Grants are awarded to a student or a small group of students of sophomore status or higher leading a research project endorsed by a UW-Whitewater faculty or staff member. Individual recipients can receive up to \$750, and groups can receive up to \$1,500.




Funds through the grants support research supplies, travel, and publication costs. Students supported by Academic Year Grants must present at either the National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR) or at the Universities of Wisconsin Symposium.

Students who conduct undergraduate research at UW-Whitewater work 1:1 with faculty or staff mentors, assisting with research and developing critical interpersonal skills that employers seek in job candidates.

Learn more about UW-Whitewater's Undergraduate Research, Innovative, and Creative Activities (URICA) program and how you can support it: uww.edu/urp



Always a Warhawk —
Reuniting, Remembering, Reconnecting

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