

# COLLEGE OF LETTERS AND SCIENCE

Fall 2020 Newsletter

## New Structure, New Possibilities

### COLS Reorganizes into Four Schools

To better fulfill its mission, the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point College of Letters and Science and its thirteen departments, as well as numerous centers and supporting activities, have been reorganized into four new schools. Each school is led by a new assistant dean and supported by an administrative specialist and academic department associate. The new college structure is as follows:

- The School of Behavioral and Social Sciences (SBSS) with the Departments of Geography and Geology, Political Science, Psychology and Sociology and Social Work
- The School of Biology, Chemistry and Biochemistry (SBCB) with the Departments of Biology and Chemistry
- The School of Humanities and Global Studies (SHGS) with the Departments of English, History and International Studies, Philosophy and Religious Studies and World Languages and Literatures
- The School of Mathematics, Computing, Physics and Astronomy (SMCPA) with the Departments of Computing and New Media Technologies, Mathematical Sciences and Physics and Astronomy.

This reorganization will entail some adjustments regarding physical locations on campus. Most notably political science and sociology and social work will move from the Collins Classroom Center to the Science Building as part of Behavioral and Social Sciences, but other departments will remain in their current buildings.

Some details still need to be worked out to fully operationalize this new structure, but it is an exciting time with great possibilities!

### Assistant Deans

#### Craig Wendorf

School of  
Behavioral and  
Social Sciences



#### Jason D'Acchioli

School of Biology,  
Chemistry and  
Biochemistry



#### Tobias Barske

School of  
Humanities and  
Global Studies



#### Cindy McCabe

School of  
Mathematics,  
Computing,  
Physics and  
Astronomy



### Inside

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- Psychology students, faculty discover remote learning benefits
- Alumni spotlight: Alexander Richter

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# Psychology Students, Faculty Embrace Telehealth

As a psychology major pursuing the degree with an emphasis in human services at UW-Stevens Point, **Greta Wollmer** was familiar with PSYC 402. Practicum in Counseling and Psychotherapy is a required course for students who choose the human services concentration, designed to prepare students for human services casework or an entry level counseling job. She had taken part in class activities with her peers.

"I had participated as a client for other PSYC 402 students, so my perception of the class was based upon in-person counseling sessions and tapings," says Wollmer, who plans to attend graduate school and pursue a master's degree in school psychology. "I knew it would be a lot of work, but I would get the opportunity to grow my skills as a future mental health care provider."

When it came time for Wollmer to take PSYC 402 this fall, the world had changed. Precautions implemented to limit the spread of COVID-19 affected the way schools delivered coursework worldwide, and the psychology practicum was no exception. The in-person counseling sessions and tapings Wollmer had experienced were replaced by remote alternatives. Through the work of professors **Jeana Magyar** and **Ellen Meier**, what could have been an impediment in students' educational journey has instead become an opportunity to develop valuable skills suited for today's health care environment.

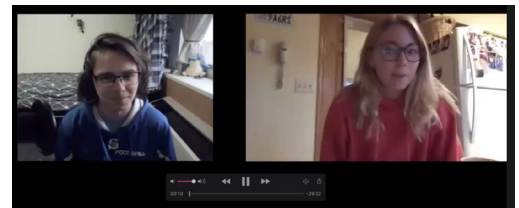
In a typical week, the first half of the class is spent discussing readings, homework, and other exercises. The second half focuses on reviewing students' work in practice counseling sessions, recorded earlier. In normal times, these sessions are conducted in the Department of Psychology's video labs, where students work with "clients" they recruited. Everything was proceeding as planned in the spring 2020 semester. Then COVID-19 hit.

"My first thought was, 'How do we do the practicum if we can't be in the same space?'" Magyar says. "I quickly realized, (Meier and I) both have clinical practices, we both see therapy clients using our licensure. I'm going to start seeing my own clients through telehealth."

Telehealth, broadly defined as the use of electronic information and telecommunications technologies to



**Students in Jeana Magyar's PSYC 402 class learn and practice counseling remotely.**



support long-distance clinical health care, is not a new option. Meier and Magyar had both used it with clients previously in a limited capacity, primarily because of insurance companies' restrictions on telehealth. With the pandemic limiting in-person opportunities, insurers and educators alike were forced to embrace remote solutions.

"By gaining experience with virtual telehealth training, I am putting myself ahead of other students by growing my skill set and expanding it to virtual platforms," says Wollmer. "I will be more prepared heading into the workforce than if I had to learn these virtual skills later."

After finishing out the spring semester in this fashion, Meier and Magyar planned for a fall semester in which all practice counseling sessions would be conducted remotely. While Meier reports that her sections are as full as they would typically be, that does not mean students were without reservations.

"I was nervous at first!" says **Maggie McConkey**, a psychology major with human services concentration. "However, it has been easy to connect with classmates and apply the techniques I'm learning. It can be clumsy at first, but once you get used to it, it's super useful."

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## Message from the Dean

Dear Friends of UW-Stevens Point's College of Letters and Science,

Much has happened since the college's last newsletter three years ago, to put it mildly. The college has faced some serious challenges, most recently a pandemic that forced many classes and other activities to shift online over the last year.

Despite those daunting circumstances, the faculty and staff of the college remained steadfast in providing first-rate educational experiences, pursuing innovative research and providing impactful service to our community, state and country.

That is a clear testament of their professionalism and dedication to the mission, vision and values of the university, as well as the steady leadership provided by Dean Eric Yonke during that period.

It is impossible to predict what lies ahead, but the college remains poised to meet any challenges and seize any opportunities.

Joshua Hagen



## Social Work Program Offered in Marshfield, Wausau

UW-Stevens Point now offers its Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited social work program on all three campuses. Beginning in Fall 2020, students on the Marshfield and Wausau campuses can earn their bachelor's degree in social work entirely in their community.

The social work program in Marshfield and Wausau delivers a rigorous and broad field course of study, and student-led and faculty-mentored research opportunities to students. The unique hybrid classroom and online format delivered over three semesters a year offers working students maximum flexibility.

"I was thrilled when UW-Stevens Point decided to offer the social work major at the Wausau campus," says **Melissa Jahnke** (right), a non-traditional student pursuing her bachelor's degree in social work. "It was a big selling point."

Students can complete their required internship in more than 40 diverse social service sites in their



home community or internationally. Students in the program at Wausau and Marshfield are also eligible to additional scholarship opportunities to help finance their education.

For more information visit [www.uwsp.edu/sociology](http://www.uwsp.edu/sociology).

### Your Gift Makes a Difference!

To create a legacy at UW-Stevens Point, please contact Tony Romano at 715-346-3406 or [tony.romano@uwsp.edu](mailto:tony.romano@uwsp.edu), or visit [www.uwsp.edu/cols/Pages/HowToSupport](http://www.uwsp.edu/cols/Pages/HowToSupport). **Thank you for your consideration!**

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# Alumni Spotlight:

## Alexander Richter

**Year graduated from UW-Stevens Point:** 2007

**Degree(s) obtained:** B.S. Political Science, Mathematics, Economics UW-Stevens Point; M.A., Ph.D. Economics, Indiana University

**Current position(s):** Senior Economist and Advisor, Director, BigTex High Performance Computing, Research Department, Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas

### What are you working on now?

There are two main aspects to my current position: (1) Conduct independent research; (2) brief our bank president, Rob Kaplan, on the national economy in preparation for Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) meetings.

### How did your time at UW-Stevens Point prepare you for your current role?

My mathematics degree was essential. Economics at the graduate level is quite different from the undergraduate level. Without the strong mathematics background I received at UWSP, I would have never made it through graduate school.

### Favorite UW-Stevens Point professor?

A number of the professors I had at UWSP were excellent, in particular those in the Mathematics Department (Andy Felt; Cindy McCabe, Mike Treuden). I am also grateful to Randy Cray for giving me the opportunity to work at the CWERB. But, I have to say, I loved



Ed Miller, who has since retired from the Political Science Department. I learned so much from Ed and always enjoyed talking with him. To this day, I credit my understanding of fiscal policy, particularly health policy, to him. Ed was truly unique.

**Advice for current students?** Work hard, challenge yourself and try new things, even if the adjustment period is difficult. UWSP is a small school, but one that you can get a great education at if you take full advantage of all that it has to offer. One of the great things about UWSP is the faculty's willingness to meet with and help students — even outside of office hours. Easy access to supportive faculty is something that can make a huge difference in your education and something that you cannot get at larger schools.

## College of Letters and Science Arrivals

Tara Anderson, Sociology and Social Work

Derek Dodson, Psychology

Joshua Hagen, Dean, Geography and Geology

Austin Hitz, Mathematical Sciences

Katie Holt, Mathematical Sciences

Chad Johnson, Computing and New Media Technologies

Margaret Kubek, Sociology and Social Work

Shuang Li, Sociology and Social Work

Sean Mooney-Leber, Psychology

Laurie Simonis, Behavioral and Social Sciences

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