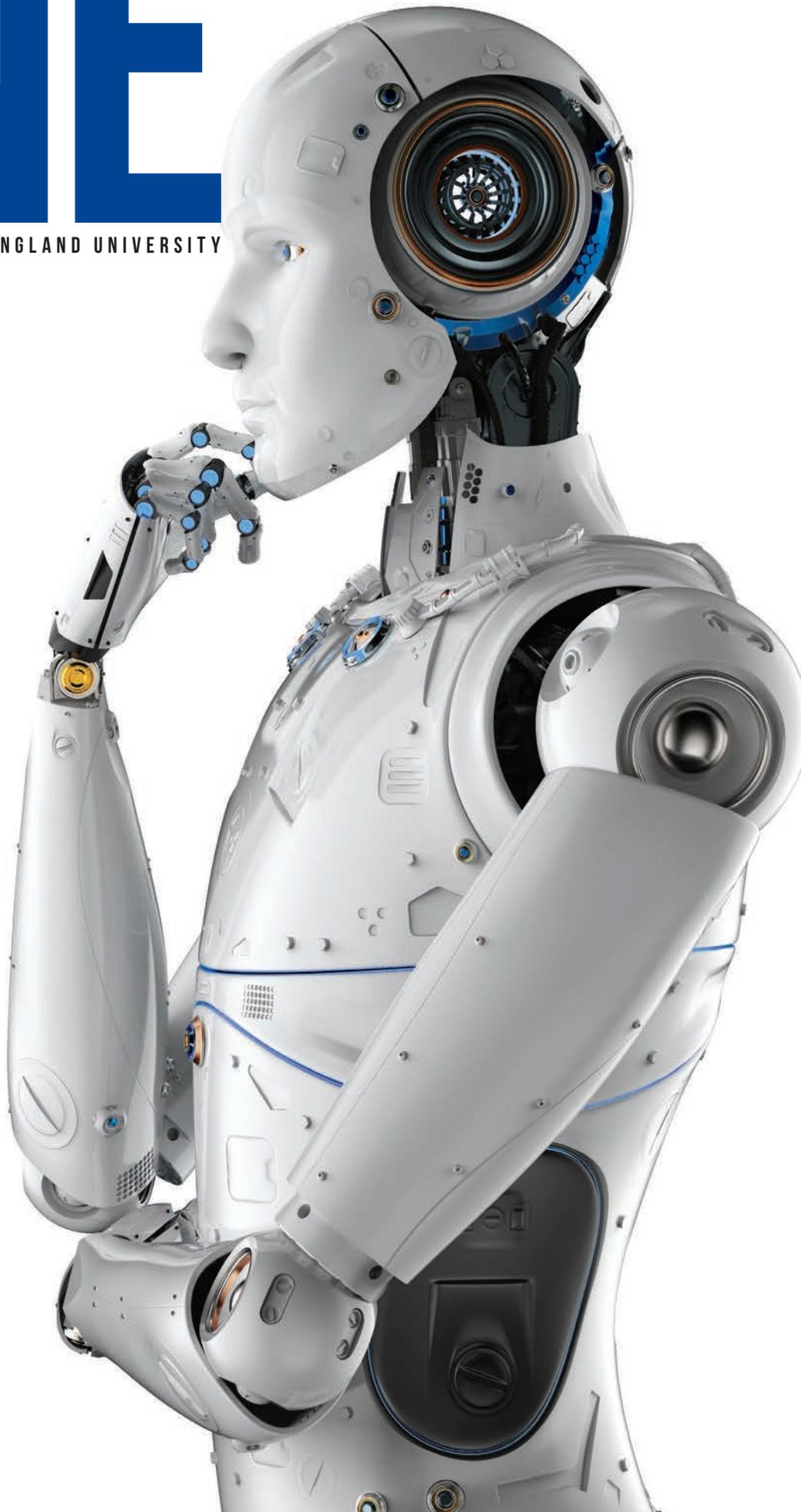


WNE

WINTER 2018

The Magazine of WESTERN NEW ENGLAND UNIVERSITY



THE FUTURE



*Can Artificial
Intelligence learn to
be more human?*

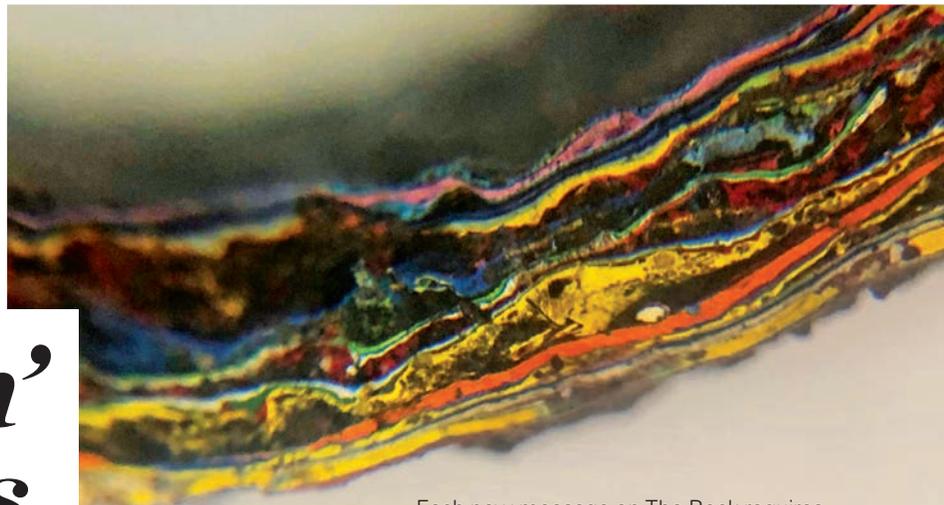


At this year's Golden Bear Weekend, members of the Class of 1968 returned to campus to celebrate their lasting legacy. Rock on!

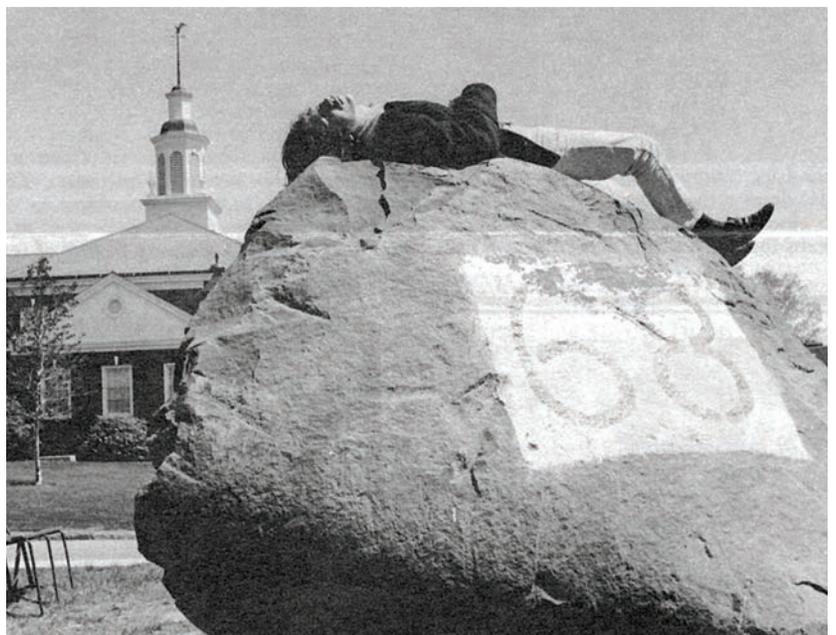
CLASS OF 1968 SENIOR PRANK

Still Rockin' the Campus

May 16, 2018 marked 50 years since members of the Class of 1968—Karl Jurgen, Rick Holland, Shelby Kaplan, Bill Piersol, Barry Roberts, Ken Cotty, Peter Duhamel, Dean Fraser, George Gaunt, Bob James, Bob Joyal, Dave Kenison, Ted Rauh, and Fred Siegfried, along with Dan Castellano '69 and Jeff Roche '69—deposited The Rock in the center of campus. Five decades later, it remains a campus icon used by student organizations as a message board to announce events from SOAR to Commencement. In the simple desire to “leave their mark on campus,” at 4:30 a.m. Jurgen and his cohorts used a material handler and a borrowed truck to move the massive boulder from a construction site at Allen and Cooley Streets. Later that morning, as the campus community gazed in awe at the new campus landmark, a small plane dropped thousands of ping-pong balls carrying messages of congratulations to the Class of 1968.



Each new message on The Rock requires a new coat of paint. This close-up of its surface tells a colorful story of events and celebrations that it has announced for more than half of the University's history.



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The Magazine of WESTERN NEW ENGLAND UNIVERSITY

The Magazine of Western New England University is published for alumni, parents, and friends of Western New England University.

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Master's and Doctoral Degrees

WELCOME

to the inaugural issue of
the *Magazine of Western
New England University!*



IN 2019, WE WILL BE CELEBRATING OUR CENTENNIAL throughout the year—100 years of Western New England! This moment in our history presents an exciting opportunity to introduce a new publication that represents the entire University as a single entity—a united university with all its components working harmoniously together to achieve its goals and realize its full potential. This new *Magazine of Western New England University* is a reflection of who we are as a contemporary university. You will see and read about the University as it is and get a sense of all that is in store for Western New England as we embark upon our second century together.

This new biannual magazine provides a vehicle to highlight and explore in-depth some of the many stories drawn from a cross-section of our vibrant University. In addition to a visually dynamic format and design, we are introducing an interactive digital version of the magazine. This gives us the flexibility to expand on stories with additional content. It also allows you to readily share stories via your own social media channels.

Indeed, we have much to take pride in and to be grateful for. Our centennial year will be one of ongoing celebration. Our 2019 issues of the *Magazine of Western New England University* will look back at our historic first century and forward to our bright future.

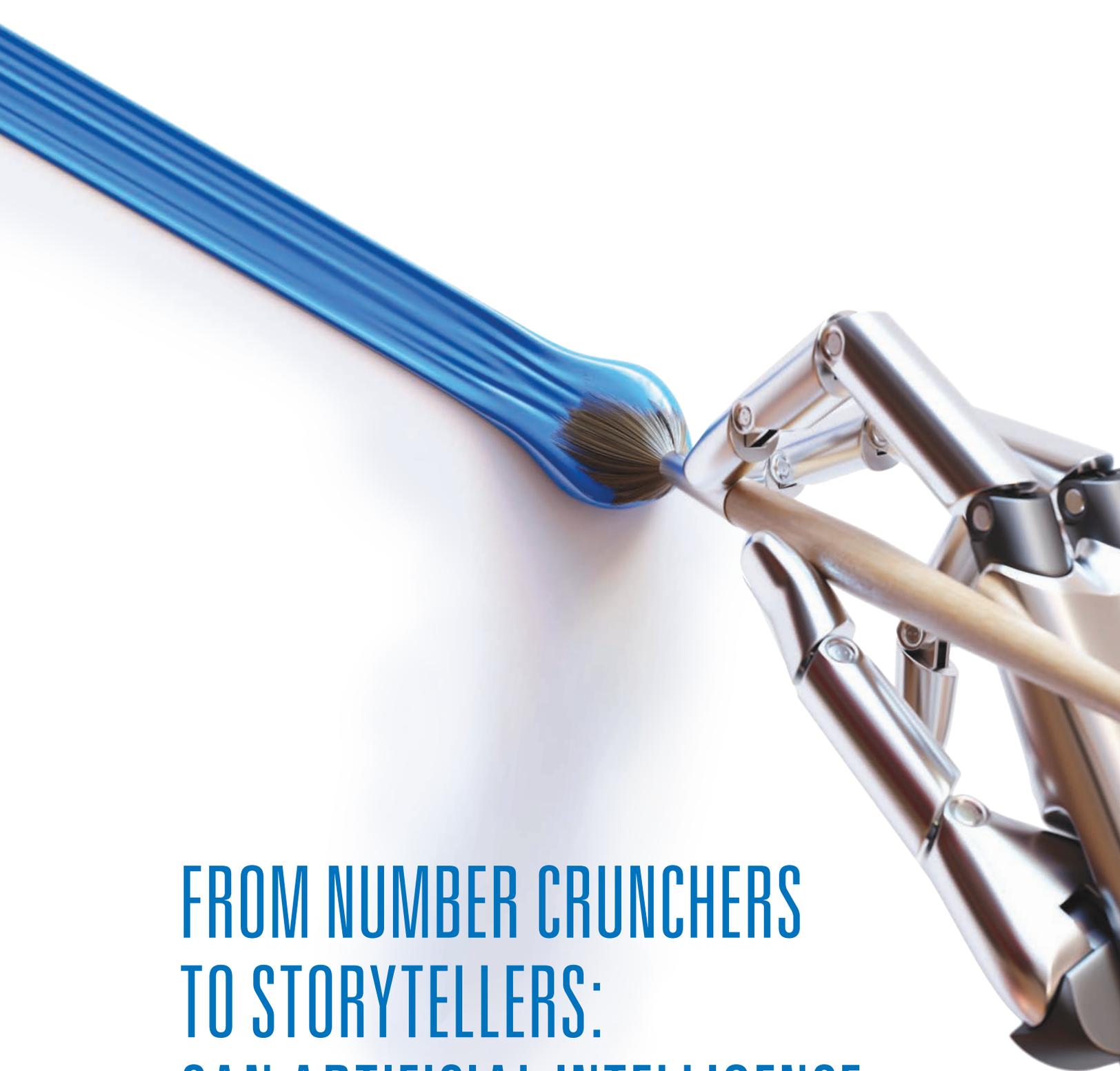
The stories in this inaugural issue demonstrate the extent to which our community members are having a powerful impact on our University and on our world. Our fascinating cover story reveals how two members of our own community—a faculty member and an alumnus—are exploring new ways to harness the potential of Artificial Intelligence in both creative endeavors and in business applications. Other articles take you inside the heart of Western New England University. You will view our most recent building project, the spectacular University Commons. You will be introduced to Professor Sudha Setty, our dynamic new dean of the School of Law. You will learn how effectively alumni and students are helping communities recover from natural disasters. The powerful personal story of Dr. Debra Latour and the journey that led to her teaching in our new Doctor of Occupational Therapy program will inspire you. You will see that we are so poised to embark upon our next 100 years!

I thank you for your ongoing support of all that Western New England has become. We marvel at what has been accomplished in our first 100 years, and we feel rightfully proud of the vital role we have all played in the evolution of our beloved Western New England University. This inaugural issue of the *Magazine of Western New England University* offers a first glimpse into the promising future we will shape together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony Caprio". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Anthony S. Caprio
President



FROM NUMBER CRUNCHERS
TO STORYTELLERS:
CAN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE
LEARN TO BE MORE *more human?*

By Alex Lyman '12/G'16



You've probably seen the commercial for Google Assistant where pop star Sia is standing in front of a mirror during a wardrobe fitting. She is mentally making a list of things she needs to get done, when it occurs to her that she should probably get some flowers to thank her assistants. But of course, she can't ask the assistants to buy their own flowers. That defeats the purpose. The commercial then helpfully suggests that she "Make Google do it."

The commercial marks the introduction of Google Duplex, the latest Artificial Intelligence (AI) program behind Google Assistant, the tech giant's answer to the well-known Siri and Alexa. Unlike its competitors, Google Assistant will not only search the Internet for you, it will literally act as your personal assistant—calling for restaurant reservations or checking the hours of your local grocery store.

Creative application of AI is a research focus of Assistant Professor of Computer Science Brian O'Neill. He considers Google Duplex to be the headline news of the Artificial Intelligence industry, not only for its usefulness, but also for the innovation that went into programming the technology. While the Google Duplex is a creative use of technology, he hopes AI can be developed in more artistic avenues, as well as practical ones.

"What I've been working on at a broad level is AI that is creative or that helps people be creative," he explains. "I'd like to see AI more involved with storytelling because that's how we, as humans, communicate. So far, they're terrible at it. Left to their own devices, all computer stories are bad because they don't know what makes stories entertaining."

Professor O'Neill, who teaches undergraduate courses in AI, began the process of helping AI improve its storytelling ability during his dissertation, starting with helping it recognize and re-create suspense. It's an interesting challenge because computers don't have the same frame of reference as humans, and no emotions to guide them. This means that Professor O'Neill has to bring his computers up to speed by providing a lot of information and creating a system that measures how suspenseful a story is and why. Despite appearing to be something of an abstract concept, the idea of suspense hinges on several key factors that can be taught to AI.

"There's a lot of psychological research on suspense, which is what we built from," he says. "It's somewhat measurable because it's based on how likely it is that you think someone is going to get out of their dilemma. If the problem doesn't seem to be a big deal, then you don't feel much suspense. But if you don't see how they're going to get out of it, that creates tension. But there is a flip side. If you believe a character is truly doomed, you stop feeling suspense. It's important that you also feel a sliver of hope for the character."

"I've also been trying to build on the same idea with teaching AI about surprise in my research here at Western New England. That's been harder because surprise can operate in many ways. It's more about what information you have and what information don't you have, as opposed to what the character may or may not know."

APPLYING AUGMENTED REALITY TO STORYTELLING



Dr. Chris Ilacqua '82/G'84 is the senior director of analytics and AI at Qlik, a company that has created an AI program that allows users to compile and manipulate large amounts of data so that they can identify trends and needs in an easier way. He feels that Qlik's success is that the program optimizes functions, but keeps humans involved in the decision-making.

Qlik gives users a platform to take their data and make predictions based on certain inputs, allowing companies an opportunity for the trial and error process of a product or service within the confines of an algorithm, rather than on store shelves or in the stock market. The AI used here is all about numbers, but the outcome is very much human.

"Our goal is to automate the mundane portion of any task so the customer can get to the storytelling aspect," Dr. Ilacqua says. "We are storytellers by nature; that is a part of the human condition. So the question always becomes 'how do we shorten the time between data acquisition to actual storytelling that changes behavior?' We have more complex data than ever and less time to react to it, so by optimizing tasks, we give the humans more time to analyze and find the golden nugget of information and run with it."

The storytelling in this case is the branding of a product or company, marketing materials, and press releases—anything that creates a connection to the product and makes the consumer feel a need to buy in. Additionally, by compiling data faster and in a way that gives a company the numbers and statistics to back up their product, they have more clout in the reliability and satisfaction department.

AI continues to revolutionize and simplify concepts like data mining and the business world is taking notice. Software such as SAP (Systems Applications and Products), which is used to integrate different business functions and departments of a company in order to create streamlined flows, are standard at many of the largest organizations.

Knowledge of this intricate but incredibly effective program is so in-demand that Western New England University has added SAP courses and certification into the College of Business curriculum and applications to the Business Analytics and Information Management program are on the rise.

However AI technology evolves in the artistic realm, Professor O'Neill doesn't predict that AI will out-create humans. Rather, he sees it being a tool for people who want to create, whether it provides musical accompaniment to a saxophone player, or acts as a tutor to a budding singer. He envisions more of a human/AI team, rather than creative competitors.

understand how and why to do something, which forces the human programmer to dig deeper cognitively to give the computer an active frame of reference. For example, in order for AI to write a story, you must tell it how to write one. From a human perspective, there isn't a concrete answer to this. This brings the need to understand our-



We're learning about what makes people creative and what people go through as a creative process by trying to reproduce it. AI is definitely a way for us to understand our own cognitive processes and what's going on in our heads.

Dr. Brian O'Neill

Overall, Professor O'Neill feels that the ability of AI is underutilized, simply relegated to the tasks that we don't want to do ourselves, such as vacuuming our homes or making appointments. In fact, he sees potential in AI doing more innately human tasks, not just for the sake of technological advancement, but also as a study of human behavior.

Programming AI isn't always entering code and hoping it works. When researchers are teaching robots and computers to tackle a task that isn't strictly objective, they have to

selfes on the deepest of levels, so that we can instruct the AI. Think of it as an ongoing psychology experiment.

Most industry experts discuss AI from the standpoints of the mechanics and machinery, or what it can do for the world of technology. However, even in the practical realms of AI, the human touch is always evident.



“

Most research being done now is on machine-to-machine learning—taking the human element out. We feel that the human must always be at the center of it because there’s no way to codify value judgment.

Dr. Chris Ilacqua

DR. BRIAN O’NEILL

Assistant Professor of
Computer Science

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Ph.D., Georgia Institute
of Technology

M.S., Georgia Institute
of Technology

B.S., Saint Joseph’s University

COURSES TAUGHT

Artificial Intelligence

Data Structures

Introduction to Programming

Software Design

Machine Learning
(in development)

TOPICS TAUGHT

Heuristic Search

Hill-climbing Search

Game Playing

Constraint-satisfaction Problems

Logic

Bayesian Networks

Neural Networks

Decision Trees

Reinforcement Learning

PROFESSOR O’NEILL

has collaborated with Western New England students and faculty on AI research, including teaching AI how to recognize and re-create surprise and working on a program for an AI competition involving a solitaire card game.

However, as AI filters into both our work and play, experts warn that they are not inherently unbiased; they inherit the biases of their programmer, whether that is the intention or not. This sometimes creates new solutions to our real-world problems that are ultimately no better than our old solutions.

“If your algorithm favors or doesn’t favor a particular group then that gets carried through to the AI,” Professor O’Neill cautions. “The AI doesn’t know any better and that is an issue. It’s important for people to recognize that AI is not a neutral party.”

However, programmers and developers can cut down on and adjust for bias by asking the AI to justify its decisions—the cyber-version of showing its work. By testing a program and having the computer explain how it came to certain conclusions and why, programmers can then spot the biases on a more objective level and adjust for them.

It’s also critical in this aspect to note that any form of AI isn’t complete once it works to satisfaction. It needs constant tweaking and updating to keep up with technological advancements and societal norms, as well as federal laws and regulations. It’s these constant gains in technological superiority that tend to make people nervous.

SCRIPTING THE FUTURE

On the future of AI, Dr. Ilacqua remarked, “It’s like having super powers—do you have the wisdom to use them properly? Are you using them for personal gain or to improve quality of life?”

As for a Terminator-style robot apocalypse, Professor O’Neill doesn’t see it happening in our lifetime.

“I’m not sold on it,” he insists. “We keep putting checks on technology because we demand perfection in its use. I’m hesitant that the level of super intelligence is actually going to be approachable. Knowing what we have trouble getting AI to do now, I have a hard time seeing anything like that ever happening. I feel like its just too far away at this point.”

So whether AI becomes more human, or simply performs human tasks, it’s safe to say the world as we know it will remain... for now. 🐾



CAMPUS NEWS

LaBranche Named New Director of Athletics

The former baseball coach who led the Golden Bears to unprecedented success returns home.

Matthew LaBranche returned to Western New England University in July to become the Director of Athletics, Recreational Sport, and Physical Education.

"I am thrilled to be returning home! It will be an honor to serve the University and its student-athletes as director," said LaBranche, who was selected following a national search. "Western New England University is a special learning community—a place where all associated take special pride in what it means to be a Golden Bear. I am eager to reconnect with our student-athletes and coaches



in order to learn from them how I can elevate their experience. The partnerships we can develop together both internally and externally will be vital to ensuring the continuation of Athletics' service to the mission of the University."

LaBranche is no stranger to Western New England, having served as baseball coach at the University for 14 seasons from 2000-13. He led the program to unprecedented success, winning nearly 70 percent of the games he coached with a 429-187 (.696) record. His teams captured nine conference championships (four GNAC, five CCC), reached the NCAA Division III Tournament on 10 occasions, and advanced all the way to the College World Series in 2011. LaBranche also served as coordinator of physical education for six years, and also held roles as instructor of health/physical education, compliance assistant, and contest manager. In 2013, LaBranche left Western New England to become head coach at Eastern Connecticut State University. He holds bachelor's and master's degrees from Springfield College.

In 19 years as a college head coach, he compiled 553 victories, 12 conference championships, 13 NCAA Tournament appearances, and numerous conference/regional coach-of-the-year accolades.

Students Explore the World

This summer **Curt Hamakawa L'84**, professor of sport management and director of the Center for International Sport Business, along with Professor of Accounting Stephen Sugermeyer '78/G'80, took a group of 10 students to Russia to study the 2018 FIFA World Cup and visit Moscow.

"The beauty of these trips is the transformational effect on students as global citizens, because of the intense, heavy dose of up-close-and-personal interaction with people from every corner of the world within a compressed space and time," says Hamakawa.

Another trip, led by Professional Educator of Communication Brenda Garton-Sjoberg and Adjunct Professor Dr. Rocco Mesiti, arrived in Sorrento, Italy to spend three weeks exploring, studying, and reporting on its rich history and contemporary culture. The group of 22 students had the opportunity



to experience guided tours of the beautiful Amalfi Coast and the Pompeii Ruins, lessons about the Italian food and wine industry, and visits to other historical and cultural sites.

Other summer 2018 study abroad seminars offered through the University included trips to Johannesburg, Pretoria, and Cape Town, South Africa; London and southern England in association with Richmond University; and Paris, France at the IESEG School of Management, a member of the University Catholique de Lille.



University Welcomes New Trustees

Five new members have joined the Board of Trustees.



MARK L. BERTHIAUME '78 of Glastonbury, CT, has more than 30 years of experience in the property and casualty insurance and technology industries. He has been employed at Hanover Insurance Group since 2014, first serving as Chief Administration Officer from 2014-2017. Since 2017, he has been the company's EVP, CIO, and Chief Innovation Technology Officer. Mark served on the Western New England University IT Advisory Board and is now a member of the College of Business Board of Advisors. He also serves on the Strategic Advisory Board for Insurity and the Advisory Board for SelectHub.



DIANNE F. DOHERTY '81 of Longmeadow, MA, serves her community in many capacities and is passionate about driving economic improvement in greater Springfield through advising and investing in local businesses. Doherty has had extensive experience in marketing and public relations for small businesses in western Massachusetts. She is a founder of the Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts, an endowment to support women and girls. In addition, she is the recipient of numerous awards and has served on several boards.



NICHOLAS LAPIER '90 of West Springfield, MA, is the owner and principal of Nicholas LaPier, CPA, a full-service Certified Public Accounting firm. He has been involved with the Alumni Association, serving on the fiscal advisory team and the golf tournament committee. LaPier is also an active member of the West of the River Chamber of Commerce and President of the West Springfield Teen Center.



DEBORAH K. SAREMI L'95 of Longmeadow, MA, is a Partner and General Counsel for both Future Health Wellness Solutions and Saremi LLP (a property management company). She has more than 30 years of experience in the insurance industry. As a licensed attorney in Massachusetts, Saremi worked in private practice prior to joining Consolidated Health Plans in 1998 as its Vice President of Compliance. She is a licensed insurance broker and has held licenses in all 50 states. She is an adjunct professor in the MBA program at Elms College and is a member of the Foundation Board of the Sisters of Providence Health Systems.



ROBERT B. STEIN JR. '79 of South Russell, OH, has had a successful 38-year business career, leading eight public and private businesses. Stein has extensive international business experience, with his most recent leadership position being of a global technology company operating in over 60 countries: President and CEO of Kalibrate Technologies, a London Stock Exchange AIM listed company. Under Stein's leadership since 2011, Kalibrate is now a global provider of fuels pricing and retail network planning software, analytics, and consulting services.

A New Perspective

DEAN SUDHA SETTY LEADS THE SCHOOL OF LAW INTO ITS SECOND CENTURY

BY MARY MCLEAN ORSZULAK G'10





Being the dean in the University's centennial year is an honor, because legal education has been a fundamental part of Western New England University for that entire 100 years," says Sudha Setty, dean of the School of Law. "Western New England University was built on the ideas of opportunity and community. As we approach the centennial, we can reflect upon and celebrate that history. We can also use it as a moment to consider what the next hundred years will look like and how we want to shape our future.

Dean Setty became the 11th dean of the School of Law in July. After seven years as a corporate litigator at the New York firm of Davis Polk & Wardwell, she joined the School of Law faculty in 2006 and rose through the ranks to a full professor and associate dean for faculty development and intellectual life (2011–2018).

UP FOR A CHALLENGE

Serving as the dean of a law school in 2018 is no easy challenge. But Sudha Setty is ready.

For more than a decade, national economic trends, greater competition, tuition costs, and concerns about return on investment contributed to a nationwide decline in law enrollments from an all-time high of 100,600 applicants in 2003-04 to just over 55,700 in 2014-15. Bold steps were needed to reimagine legal education and Western New England University responded: tuition was frozen for several years; new scholarships were established; the curriculum was revamped to enhance its focus on professional skills, externships, and clinical programs; bar exam preparation, academic support, and programs for non-lawyers were expanded; and alumni engagement was strengthened. Thanks to these efforts and a recent national uptick in applications, things are changing.

Dean Setty is cautiously optimistic. "Today, law schools throughout the U.S. are strategizing, and in some cases, retooling to adjust to the expectations of a changed legal market, changed law school admissions market, and constrained budgets," she says.

She believes that this new landscape requires leadership to be creative on many fronts: developing new academic programs and revenue streams in the domestic, international, and online spheres; keeping student debt as low as possible through financial development and budget management; supporting faculty's scholarly work and professional development while valuing the craft of teaching; and creating a diverse and inclusive legal academic community.

"We are continuing to bring in students with stronger academic credentials, and we are proud of what our graduates can do," says Dean Setty. "Earlier this year, the American Bar Association released the results of its nationwide study on bar passage, and Western New England's Ultimate Bar Pass Rate (the percentage of 2015 graduates who passed the bar exam within two years of graduation) was 90.7%, well above the national average. The feeling that we're on an upward trajectory has inspired a sense of optimism in the School."

SEEING AND HEARING BOTH SIDES

It has been said that a legal education will forever change the way you think.

"One of the great things about law schools is that we teach people to think and how to approach complex problems even if they're not applying those skills toward a JD degree," she says. "Whether students intend to be practicing attorneys, serve as human resources professionals, or on their town's zoning board, understanding the law and how to think about the law gives them tools to analyze complex issues that involve the law and to work effectively toward solutions."

Dean Setty's own interest in the law began with her middle school debate club experience.

"I really liked looking at multiple sides of an issue," she recalls. "It gave me an empathetic understanding that people who are thoughtful about issues can have very different views. It's also a strategic matter. The coaches of our team said, 'You are not going to win an argument unless you are willing to listen to and to understand counterarguments.'"

Mock trial experience in high school solidified her desire to be a lawyer despite never having met one. Dean Setty's parents emigrated from India, and raised their two children in the Worcester, Massachusetts area and then in Storrs, Connecticut. They supported their daughter's decision to pursue a degree in history with a concentration in comparative civil rights, and later to earn a juris doctor degree.

"In college I was drawn to the idea of seeing parallels across different countries and understanding that political and legal

movements that occur in different cultural contexts and across different eras are often informed by the same power dynamics and similar struggles toward justice," she explains. "Looking comparatively at these topics really spoke to me. It informed my view of the powerful role that lawyers can play as agents of nonviolent social change."

That foundation laid the groundwork for how Setty thinks about the law and lawyers, and influenced her research and teaching interests.

Some in higher education and the media have attributed the recent rise in JD applicants to a so-called "Trump Bump," channeling a passion for social justice into an interest in a legal career. Dean Setty sees the actions of the administration as

his inauguration, it was a reminder of how important the law and lawyers are in our society," she says. "Seeing lawyers and law students running to airports with their laptops to help travelers being detained or turned away at our borders was a powerful testament to the role that lawyers can play in helping those in need. But it was also a reminder that the administration would have benefited greatly from the thoughtful counsel of lawyers who could have helped shape and draft sound policy, something that was clearly lacking with regard to that initial executive order."

In 2017, Dean Setty revised her approach to teaching constitutional law to help students use their analytical skills to understand the fast-paced changes

"For each and every student, no matter where they lie on the political spectrum, Western New England University School of Law teaches the analytical and practical skills to be able to tackle the problems of the real world in a thoughtful and ethical manner, and to better serve their clients and society."

a broader reminder of the important skillset a legal education can provide.

"I think that the current administration has illustrated clearly the importance of good lawyering. I said this during the School of Law's 2017 series on the 'First 100 Days of the Trump Administration.' When President Trump issued his first executive order on travel and immigration right after

occurring in government and society. She began almost every class by asking students if they want to discuss the news through the lens of constitutional law. "This approach, although time-consuming, had enormous benefits: it gave students a more active voice in the classroom, enlivened historical material (such as learning about the limits of presidential

AN INTERNATIONAL LEGAL SCHOLAR AND ACCLAIMED TEACHER

Dean Setty holds a J.D. from Columbia Law School and an A.B. from Stanford University. She is both a gifted classroom teacher and noted legal scholar. Her teaching and extensive body of scholarship focus on constitutional law, comparative law, rule of law, and national security. Her 2017 book, *National Security Secrecy: Comparative Effects on Democracy and the Rule of Law* (Cambridge University Press), examines the infrastructure of national security-related secrecy in the United States from a comparative perspective.

Her scholarship has led to invitations to teach and present her work around the globe, including as a visiting scholar at the University of Cape Town in 2018, as a conference organizer and presenter at the National Law School of India in 2016, as a Fulbright Senior Specialist at the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 2014, and as a visiting lecturer at Tilberg University in 2014.

Among her numerous accolades, Dean Setty is a three-time recipient of the School's Catherine Jones Teaching

Excellence Award (2009, 2016, 2018) and the 2017 Connecticut Bar Association Tapping Reeve Legal Educator of the Year. In July 2018 she was elected to membership in the American Law Institute. She serves on the editorial board of the *Journal of National Security Law and Policy*, and on the executive committee of the American Society of Comparative Law.

Read more about Dean Setty at wne.edu/law.



power through the context of the special counsel's investigation), and helped students gain the tools to analyze legal issues in the news. It broadened the number of issues we discussed in class, and empowered students to educate me and each other on various topics."

A NEW VISION FOR A CHANGING LEGAL CLASSROOM

One of the biggest changes shaping the School of Law today is a paradigm shift from its role of "teaching lawyers" to "teaching how to work with the law." While the JD program is the core of the institution, the School of Law now offers master's programs in law for non-lawyers. The Master of Science in Law is designed for financial and HR professionals, journalists, policy makers, and many others who deal with legal topics in their work, but don't see themselves as becoming practicing attorneys. The online Master of Science in Elder Law and Estate Planning is offered for accountants, financial experts, social workers, and insurance professionals seeking greater expertise in legal aspects of their jobs.

The online master's program is an outgrowth of the LLM in Elder Law and Estate Planning, an advanced degree for practicing lawyers.

Potential changes by the law school accrediting body may allow other online opportunities for our School of Law. "The ABA is contemplating a significant shift in its standards. If that occurs, a lot of law schools will be looking at how much of the JD program to offer as distance learning," says Dean Setty. "It's exciting to consider the opportunities that may open up for JD students to spend a semester studying online while doing fieldwork here or abroad. As an institution, we will have to weigh the potential benefits of these opportunities while ensuring we stay true to our fundamental mission of giving our students an excellent legal education."

WHAT'S NEXT?

As she settles into her new role, Dean Setty looks to solidify current programs, expand clinics, and explore new opportunities to leverage faculty expertise. The new School of Law Speakers Bureau and the highly successful Mini-Law School seminars for the

general public are two such examples. She is also intrigued by the prospect of establishing a Center for Social Justice, an idea that has been floated at the School of Law in recent years that she is ready to explore, especially given the strength of the faculty, student interest, and the unmet legal needs of the Springfield/Hartford community.

"Part of this first year will be thinking about the nuts and bolts of a center, but also looking at the capacities and interests of the various stakeholders of the School."

For Dean Setty, one of the attractions of the deanship was the opportunity to both manage and inspire the people she works with in such new initiatives.

"It is gratifying to have tremendous support from faculty, staff, students, and alumni," she says. "The dean is the person who sets the tone and vision for the School. There are many voices here. As a person who values multiple perspectives, my goal is to set that tone collaboratively as we move into our second century and contemplate new and exciting possibilities for the School of Law." 🐾



A BIG HEARTED GIFT MAKES A BIG IMPACT ON CAMPUS

Bequest Supports Student Life Enhancements

BY PATRICIA GAGNON

Theodore “Ted” Roukas led a quiet, private life in the Forest Park area of Springfield, MA, but his legacy at Western New England University will be large and impactful.

Ted Roukas ‘67 left a \$1.4 million unrestricted gift in his will to the University. In recognition of his generosity, the fourth-floor outdoor terrace of the new University Commons is now known as the Theodore W. Roukas Terrace. Funds from his gift have been earmarked to support future renovations to the Campus Center. While the terrace serves as an important gathering space to honor alumni and celebrate student achievement, the Campus Center refurbishments will focus on support of student success and professional development.

Ted passed away on January 31, 2016 at the age of 85. While employed as an engineer at Hamilton Standard, he received his Bachelor of Business Administration from Western New England in 1967 as a Management major. A Dean’s List student, Ted was a member of the Student Council, serving as lecture chairman and vice president, dance chairman, college ring chairman, and as a member of the Pi Tau Kappa Fraternity.

Ted served in the Army National Guard and was a longtime member of St. George Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Springfield, where he was a member of its parish

council. He retired from Pratt & Whitney in 1985. “Ted was a collector of antique firearms, books, coins, and stamps and was an avid photographer,” says his attorney Joel Castleman L’87. “He travelled all around New England for years attending flea markets and auctions.”

Visiting him at his home, Joel would tell Ted about his daughter Emily who was attending Western New England and played lacrosse and that’s when he learned Ted had graduated from Western New England. “After that, he always asked about Emily on every visit, and I told him how much the University had grown from my time attending law school and coaching lacrosse there in the 1980s.”

When it was time to prepare his will, having no children of his own, Ted wanted to leave his estate to charity. “When he mentioned giving a portion to Western New England, I told him he could direct it in any way.” In the end, Ted decided on an unrestricted gift to the University to honor his education. “He was a modest man with a big heart,” says Joel. “His generous bequest will impact generations of students to come.” 🐾

If Western New England holds a special place in your heart, please consider making a legacy gift. Visit legacy.wne.edu to explore your options.

THE THEODORE W. ROUKAS TERRACE

This fourth-floor outdoor terrace provides the University with an open-air premier event space to recognize and celebrate our learners’ accomplishments and gather with alumni and friends.



SHARED MEALS AND CONVERSATION

*New University Commons
Unites Our Community*

BY ALEX LYMAN '12/G'16

THE ROUKAS
TERRACE



When you look up at the 30-foot banners hanging from the top of the new, four story University Commons, you get the sense that something great must be cooking inside (and it's not just the food). The grand entryway, panoramic windows, and the aroma of home cooking are both alluring and hold the promise of the excitement that comes wherever Golden Bears gather. And with about 1,000 seats, there's room for everyone at the table.

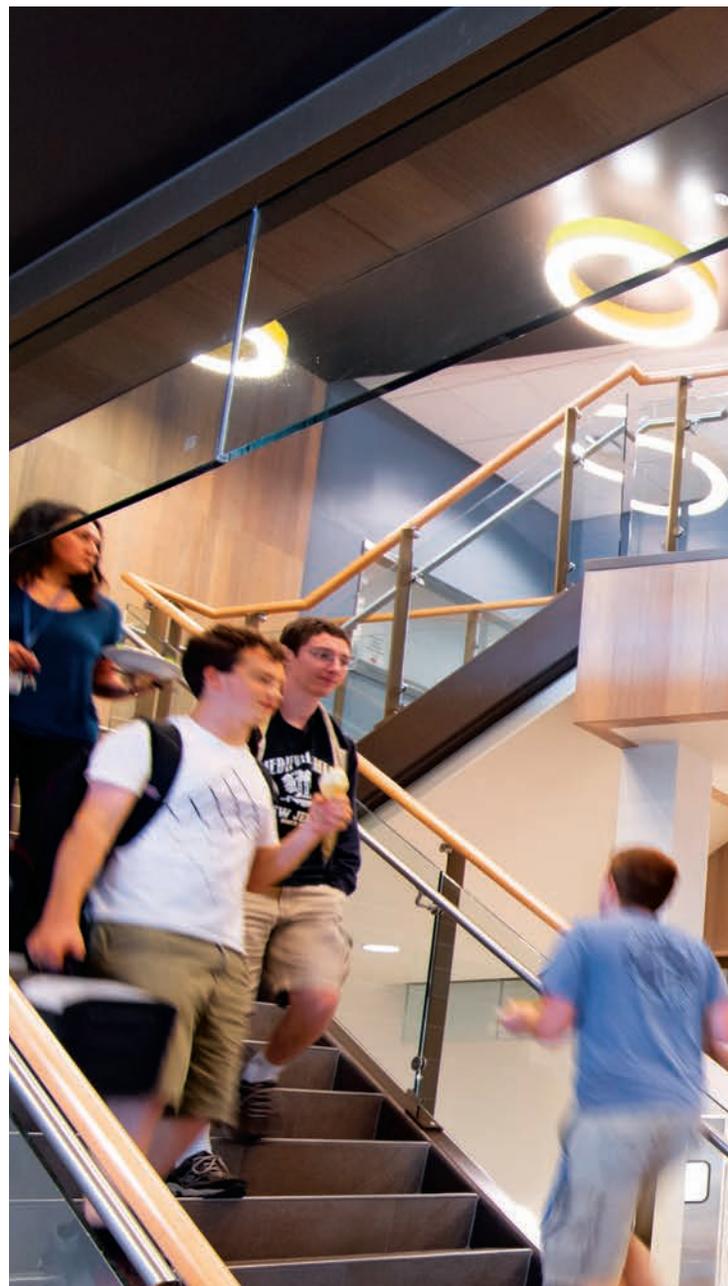
On your next visit to campus, be sure to stop in for something to eat! Our expanded dining options include Starbucks® Bakery Café, Grille Works, Firehouse Subs®, and the Food Court Market, as well as the main dining hall, which encompasses two floors and includes food prepared by The Fresh Food Company daily.

But this new building isn't just for meals. It's the center of the action on campus and the heart of the community. Never before has it been easier or more convenient to share a meal

with friends and professors, work on group projects, or discuss academic theory over coffee. In fact, it is just as likely that some of the University's greatest ideas and endeavors will be born in the University Commons as the D'Amour Library or the engineering labs. You can stay as long as you like and your technology will always be powered through an abundance of USB ports located on and around the seating areas.

The University Commons was designed to be a multi-functional space with areas that can be rented for meetings, conferences, and events. From the various room sizes and options, to the modular seating and close proximity to catering, the possibilities are endless. The goal was to create a space that would work for any event or activity, and allow room for innovative and creative endeavors to grow.

From cuisine, connections, and creativity, the new University Commons represents progress for our campus, fostering a greater sense of community and providing a place to simply be together. 🐾



“The new University Commons has been a fantastic addition to the Western New England campus community. The number of options for eating has increased, and the quality of the food has skyrocketed along with it. However, the most important impact it has had revolves around improvements to the overall campus atmosphere. From breakfast until the building closes, many students spend time relaxing, socializing, and doing work while enjoying the pleasant atmosphere in the building. The University Commons not only serves food; it serves the students as a beacon of our community.”

Ian McReynolds, Student Senate President









**DR. DEBRA LATOUR
SEEKS TO “MAKE
A MILLION DIFFERENCES”
AS AN OCCUPATIONAL
THERAPY EDUCATOR,
ADVOCATE, AND
INNOVATOR**

BY MARY MCLEAN ORSZULAK G'10

Different By Design

One of the first things you notice when you meet Dr. Debra Latour is an unusual sound. As she speaks and gestures, you realize it's the clicking of her bracelet worn not on her wrist, but prominently on her prosthetic arm. It's a visible and audible reminder that Dr. Latour celebrates what makes her unique—and that outlook may have made all the difference in her life.

An assistant professor of practice in the second year of the Doctor of Occupational Therapy program at Western New England University, Dr. Latour says she is exactly where she wants to be—in her career and in life.

She's an educator, therapist, advocate, consultant, inventor, and entrepreneur, who embraces a profound faith and exudes an infectious sense of fun.

Registered in six states, the long-time occupational therapist-turned-academic completed her O.T.D. last spring and is excited to be a part of the innovative three-year Doctor of Occupational Therapy program, one that educates students to be leaders and innovators in the high-growth field of occupational therapy.

Occupational therapists help people participate in the “job of living” through the therapeutic use of everyday activities (occupations). Common interventions include helping children with physical challenges to participate fully in school and social situations, aiding people recovering from injury to regain skills, and supporting older adults experiencing physical and cognitive changes.

Reflecting the field's growing demand for therapists with doctoral degrees, Western New England's program offers a direct path from a bachelor's to a doctorate with no intermediary master's degree required. As long as applicants have the proper prerequisites, bachelor's degrees in many disciplines are viable for enrollment.

PRIMED TO PERSEVERE Dr. Latour, who was born in the 1950s with a congenital upper limb difference, surprisingly never had occupational therapy growing up, but what she did have were two very creative and encouraging parents.

The eldest of six children, she feels fortunate to have grown up in West Springfield, MA, just across the river from the Shriners Hospitals for Children. It was there that her determined young parents brought their infant daughter to be fitted with a prosthetic arm. But they were initially turned away. “Bring her back when she's five,” the doctors told her parents. Her father, who had studied

engineering at Western New England before dropping out to raise his family, and her mother, an artist and later entrepreneur, were concerned that their daughter would be devel-

“I THINK I’M INVENTIVE BECAUSE I GREW UP HAVING MY PARENTS RIG THINGS UP FOR ME ALL THE TIME. I PLAYED GUITAR. I WOULD HAVE TROUBLE HOLDING ON TO THE PICK WITH MY PROSTHESIS, AND MY DAD WOULD CONJURE UP A WAY FOR ME TO DO THAT.”

opmentally delayed in learning basic childhood tasks needed to attend kindergarten if she did not have the use of two limbs. With their persistence, Shriners agreed to make Dr. Latour a test case and at 14 months old she became the youngest person in the U.S. to be fitted with a prosthetic arm.

While her parents were thrilled, young Debi initially rejected her new appendage. It was hot, sticky, and the harness chafed her tender skin. When her parents weren't looking, the strong-willed toddler routinely threw it in the trash.

“I remember I cried every time my parents put it on me,” says Dr. Latour, who has kept a number of her childhood devices. “One of the most poignant memories I have was that I would try to throw it away at night. Those were the days when we had furnaces in our basements and my dad would empty the trash to be incinerated in ours every night. This particular night, when I was about three years old, I remember being in bed and hearing my mother call to my dad, ‘Eddie did you empty the trash already?’ and I heard this scurrying around and the next thing I knew I was pulled out of bed and plunked onto the bottom step of the basement stairs. I remember watching my

dad open up the furnace as fire came out of it. He grabbed a metal hanger, unwound it, and dug in there to pull out my little prosthesis.”

Watching her father do something so dangerous had a profound impact on Dr. Latour and changed her relationship with the device. She knew it must be something valuable and important. Despite periodic tears, she learned to use it to pull up her own zippers, tie her shoes, and do the occupational tasks learned by other children preparing for school.

A LASTING IMPRESSION A good student, Dr. Latour twice encountered ignorant public school teachers in the sixties and seventies, who felt her physical differences affected her intellect and made her undeserving to be in their class. Their unfathomable bullying only made her more determined.

Dr. Latour enjoyed both writing and STEM subjects so it was especially hurtful when her algebra teacher sought to harass and embarrass her.

He made her sit front row and center and at the end of each class gave her just a few seconds to gather all the papers handed in by classmates into alphabetical order as he slapped a table counting down to zero. Failure to meet this demand led to warnings and lowered Dr. Latour's grades.

When her parents realized what was happening, they made arrangements for their daughter to be transferred and also be assigned to a new guidance counselor, one who didn't share the teacher's views. Unfortunately, Dr. Latour had to remain until the end of the semester. On her last day, her mother suggested she make a lasting impression.

“I was mortified to do it and didn't like drawing attention to myself, but I went up to him, told him I had learned *a lot* in his class,



“

My whole life has been just one divine appointment, not that it hasn't been without challenges or sorrows or hardships. I wouldn't say it was a totally charmed life, but I certainly am blessed and have had a great life.



and reached out to shake his hand with my prosthetic arm. He shook my hook and I walked out,” she recalls. “It was one of the hardest things I ever did.”

THE PERFECT FIT Dr. Latour found a new and intuitive guidance counselor, who recognized in her the qualities that would make her a good fit for the field of occupational therapy. She earned her bachelor's degree in Occupational Therapy from Tufts University. While working as a therapist at Shriners Hospitals that had been so important to her, she pursued an M.Ed. in Advanced OT from Springfield College and a doctorate from A.T. Still University.

Seeking to help patients beyond those in her personal care, she created a blog (Single-HandedSolutions.blogspot.com). Dr. Latour also runs a consulting business: Single-Handed Solutions, whose tagline is “not to make a million dollars, but to make a million differences.” It consults for organizations such as Handspring, Liberating Technologies, and TRS; creates educational instructions for patients and therapists; and produces videos that feature her demonstrating adaptive strategies. She is extremely proud of her several patented devices.

INSPIRED DESIGN As a young woman, Dr. Latour was frustrated that her prosthesis' harness was uncomfortable and did not allow her to wear fashionable clothes like her peers. Finding a better solution was always on the back of her mind. One night after attending a religious retreat and praying for a solution, she awoke to a sense of divine inspiration. She knew instantly what the harness should look like. The next day at work, she cobbled together materials to create a prototype. She knew who to show it to first—her parents.



“They were out shopping for a new washing machine,” she says. “I insisted on meeting them right away to show them that I had finally found a solution. We all ended up crying with joy in the parking lot at Home Depot.”

She offered the patent rights to Shriners, where she worked at the time, because “I wanted to leave something behind with the entity that had given to me,” she says. When the small marketplace for upper limb difference technology didn't procure a community partner to distribute or manufacture the devices, Dr. Latour, her husband, and her father took to manufacturing them in her home. To date, through distributors in the U.S. and Canada, she has sent thousands of her Cutaneous Anchor Technology devices around the globe.

CHAMPIONING “UNLIMITED” WELLNESS

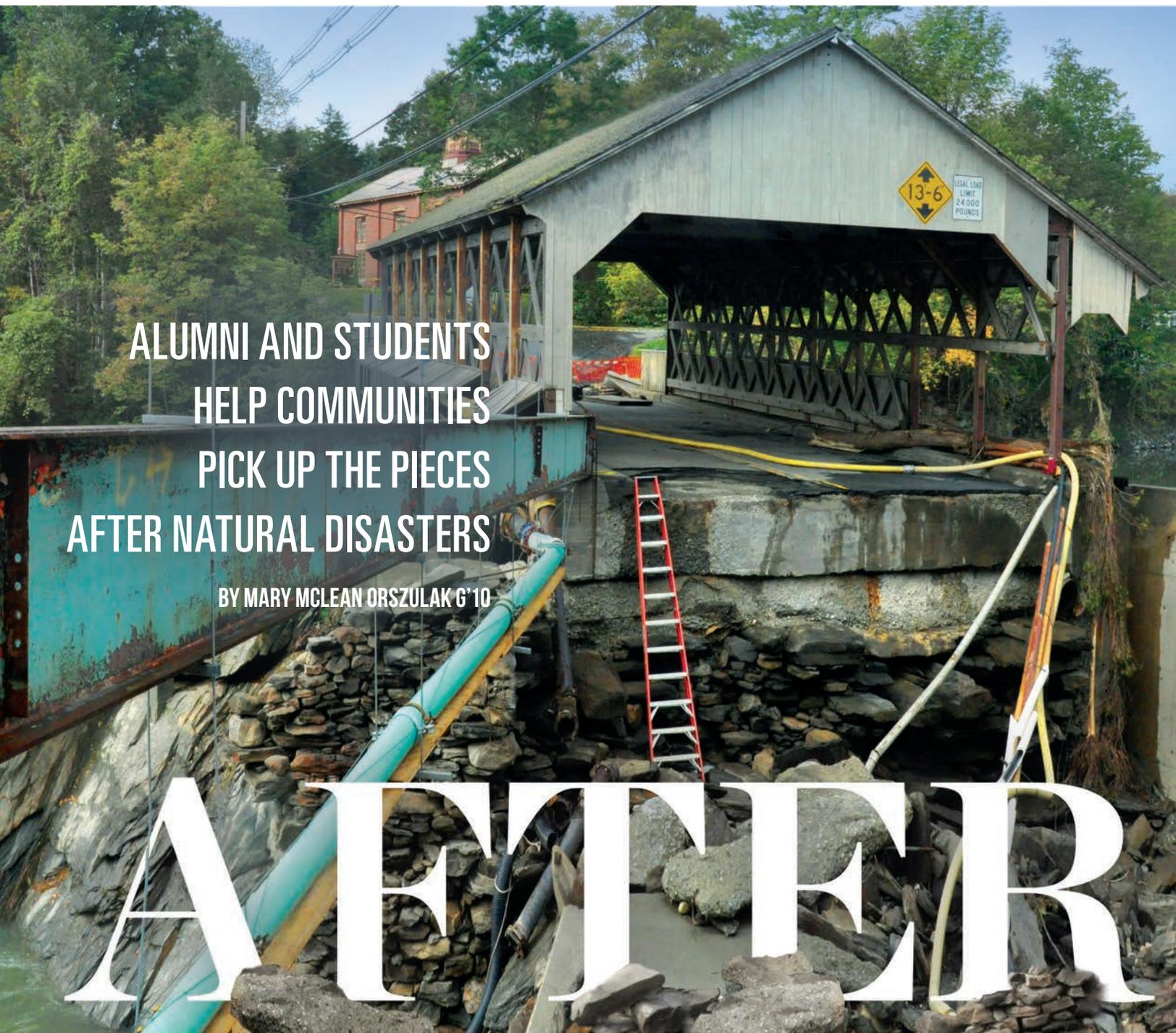
What drew Dr. Latour to the profession of occupational therapy was its emphasis on both the art of practice with its origins in the use of textile arts and crafts as a part of therapies paired with the application of science. Now in its second century, she is excited to see that duality in the profession continue.

“The vision for our program is to combine the clinical experience with the academic preparation, which is unique, so that instead of working out of separate silos the faculty is enmeshed; we are integrated,” she explains. “I love that vision because I think it's very difficult for students to integrate knowledge that comes from these different areas and not see it put into practice.”

Dr. Latour's dissertation, ongoing research, and lectures focus on what she calls “the idea of population health and how conditions may or may not affect patients throughout life.”

Part of the goal of lifelong study of populations with congenital or acquired limb difference is to build a larger body of research to help advocate for their needs and coverage by insurance. After years of overuse, Dr. Latour's own natural arm has gone from 80-lbs. of gripping ability to just 20. Most shockingly, her externally-powered prosthetic is not covered by insurance.

She's determined to make that practice history. “If I can protect a generation through preventative strategies and awareness, then maybe I can make a real difference.” 🐾



ALUMNI AND STUDENTS
HELP COMMUNITIES
PICK UP THE PIECES
AFTER NATURAL DISASTERS

BY MARY MCLEAN ORSZULAK G'10

AFTER

THE

For days they are the lead story on every media outlet, capturing national attention as we monitor rapidly changing weather maps and watch meteorologists battling winds and ratings to tell the big story. Then, just as quickly, they are too often forgotten. They are natural disasters.

In the eleven years that she has worked for Vermont Emergency Management, Erica Bornemann '08 (Political Science), now the agency's director, has seen a lot. But nothing could have prepared her or the Green Mountain State she loves for the highly unusual conditions that led Hurricane Irene on August 29, 2011 to rain down on the state for 12 straight hours and leave many rural communities still struggling to recover economically more than seven years later.

When it stalled over Vermont, Irene turned virtually every small mountain stream and brook in the state into a torrent, flooding over banks and gushing down rivers to the populated valleys below. The floodwaters carried away homes and harvests along with many of the state's iconic wooden bridges. Three lives were lost.

"Hurricane Irene exacerbated the impacts of what was an extremely wet year," recalls Bornemann, who leads one of four key divisions in the Department of Public Safety. "We had another disaster declaration that spring because we had a combination of record snow fall and record rain fall for two straight months that brought our biggest lake, Lake Champlain, above flood levels and that lasted for weeks. Then we had rainstorm after rainstorm so we never really dried out all summer. So you put seven to eleven inches of rainfall on top of that and you've got a huge disaster."

According to Bornemann, the storm was a billion dollar disaster for the small state (pop. 623,657). "There was \$250

million in damages that were eligible for our programs and another \$250 million in highway infrastructure. There was also a lot of hard work that had to be done in terms of economic losses so it was a billion dollar disaster for us—and that's big. The only storms it compares to were the 1927 Great Vermont Flood and the 1938 New England Hurricane. Hopefully we won't have anything as big as that again in my lifetime."

With bridges and roads washed out, many communities were cut off. Vermonters, known for their culture of self-reliance, didn't wait for help. Neighbors helped neighbors and where no roads remained they built their own. In a state highly dependent on tourism, many small towns have still not recovered economically.

"Recovery is something that lasts a lifetime for many people. So on a day-to-day basis we are recovering from no less than 10 disasters here in Vermont," says Bornemann.

BUILDING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

As communities around the country face even larger storms this year, lessons learned from Irene have strengthened Vermont's disaster preparedness. One of the biggest obstacles facing storm responders was spotty communications in a state where mountainous topography and a disdain for cell towers had offered limited coverage. Since then it has adopted the Vermont Alert system, which allows



residents to receive wireless alerts. Bornemann's team has also stepped up social media communications and she welcomes a new nationwide system for first responders called FirstNet.

As part of her job, Bornemann oversees preliminary assessments of damage with FEMA to validate damage declarations to procure federal monies to repair local infrastructure. "That's so important because infrastructure supports a town's economy and if it is damaged and stays damaged for a long period then over time the economy will erode," she says. "People will move away and the community will erode. That's the whole purpose of emergency management—to ensure that folks are not only prepared for a disaster, but also that their responders are ready, and that we have all of the partners at the table to be able to recover fully and build better than it was before."

BEING READY

With major storms wreaking havoc on unexpected places like hurricanes in Vermont and tornados in Springfield, it's essential to be prepared for the unexpected.

"Disasters are cyclical so no matter where you are, you're always before or after a disaster," reminds Bornemann. "That's the way we really view it. The biggest things

STORM



WHAT PREPARED BORNEMANN FOR HER ROLE IN DISASTER RECOVERY?

“The huge advantage to political science is that it’s broadly applicable,” says Bornemann, who interned for Springfield Emergency Management and then for her current agency. “You can go work on a campaign, get involved in policy or analysis, or like me apply what you have learned in local government. Once I began working in emergency management, I earned my master’s in Public Administration from Norwich University. We often say here that public service is the public trust and we take that very seriously. If there’s one message that I would give to current students it’s that as a public servant you are beholden and responsible to your constituents.”



Alexis Zysek '16

ALTERNATIVE SPRING BREAKS ASSIST IN THE AFTERMATH

Last spring, a team of 20 undergraduates from our Alternative Spring Break program traveled to the Houston area to help assist with Hurricane Harvey relief. “People need to understand the time it takes to clean and rebuild,” says Gian Zito (Management and Leadership), who co-led the trip. “It’s important to help everyone equally or to the best of your ability. Because any help counts when it is truly needed.” To help communities deal with long-term legal issues, contingents of law students have spent four of their Alternative Spring Breaks assisting residents in New Orleans and Biloxi, MS.



that I encourage people to do are (1) Be informed and have a plan—have cash on hand, food and water for more than three days, and make sure your whole family knows the plan. (2) Get involved—you may not be in a place where you were affected, but you definitely have some neighbors who were. Your community and everyone has an obligation to take an interest in making sure that their community gets back up on its feet. If you’re going to volunteer, do it through an affiliated organization and make sure you’re not just showing up. (3) If you’re going to make a donation, do so in the way that your emergency management asks you to make a donation. After a big, nationwide disaster people want to help, but it can almost be a second disaster when it’s not done in an organized fashion.”

A CALL TO SERVE

When Alexis Zysek '16 graduated with her bachelor’s degree in Social Work, she decided to join AmeriCorps to develop leadership skills, strengthen communities, and aid in natural disaster recovery efforts.

Zysek and her team of young volunteers were trained at the Southern Region headquarters in Vicksburg, MS. When Hurricane Harvey began to take shape out West, they were told to be ready to deploy there. Suddenly, the U.S. was facing hurricanes on two fronts, as Irma was speeding toward Florida and Zysek would soon be too.

Following the Category 5 hurricane’s landfall in Florida on September 10, 2017, the team was sent for two weeks to volunteer with Save the Children at a shelter in Miami to provide child-friendly spaces for displaced families. Next they traveled to the Keys and witnessed Irma’s devastation at ground zero.

“The Key West flooding had receded, but the debris was just everywhere,” she recalls. “Parts of buildings were ripped off and boats overturned. People’s entire homes were just

piled up by the side of the road waiting for dump trucks to take them away. We distributed supplies and estimate that we helped more than 13,000 individuals affected by Irma.”

As Zysek met members of the community, she was struck by the stoicism of the Floridians who know all too well the risks of living in an idyllic setting in the shadow of potential storms.

“You really feel the devastation through the residents, but you are also inspired by the composure that they show as they scramble to get their lives back together,” says Zysek.

Next, the team worked on rehabilitating homes in Columbia, SC, a low-lying region still recovering from what has been deemed “Thousand Year” flooding when 13 dams failed in 2015. Other assignments in the region included clearing overgrowth in a historic African American cemetery in Richmond, VA with a small nonprofit, The Enrichment Foundation. Then the team came full circle—back to Florida to work for St. John’s Housing Partnership in St. Augustine on home renovation projects.

Now looking to start a career in disaster response, Zysek says, “My service in AmeriCorps was incredibly meaningful and eye-opening. In my New England internships, I really used the skills that I gained in the Social Work program. But in disaster response, you’re called to wherever you are needed and join with whomever you can work toward the same goal—getting victims into a safe environment in the shortest recovery time possible. I learned so much from the people we helped, who were really the experts because they had lived through hurricanes before. It was truly life changing.” 🐾

What do you get when you combine the University's two biggest groups of fans into one great gathering?

HOMECOMING + FAMILY & FRIENDS = GOLDEN BEAR WEEKEND

BY GINA LANZANO '18



The Golden Bears beat the University of New England 70-13



Golden Graduates Luncheon



For the first time since 2001, Homecoming combined with the annual Family and Friends Weekend to create one jam-packed, activity-filled event. Golden Bear Weekend provided opportunities for alumni to rekindle old friendships and get to know current students and their families.

The celebration kicked off on October 19 when President Anthony S. Caprio hosted alumni from the Classes of 1968 and earlier for the Golden Graduates Luncheon. That evening featured the Downes Athletic Hall of Fame Dinner and the Law Alumni Recognition Reception, honoring several distinguished School of Law graduates.

Activities continued into Saturday with the Donor Recognition Brunch in the morning to celebrate the University's supporters for their contributions to enhance the experience of current students.

Attendees strolled from Commonwealth Lawn to Golden Bear Boulevard to collect souvenirs, enjoy specialties from the food trucks, test their strength with the

ROTC pull-up contest, or watch their children play lawn games.

While the Golden Bear Cheerleaders, Dance Team, Band, and Drumline showcased extraordinary performances during the football game, in the distance the sounds of cheering could be heard in the CUB parking lot as students raced down the road for the Annual Residence Hall Association Bed Race. A brave Parents Association team competed alongside students from each of the residence halls.

The evening concluded with the highly anticipated U&ME/MGA Reunion Dinner Dance, the School of Law's 19th Annual Alumni & Students of Color Dinner, and the Class of 1968 50th Reunion Banquet. Each event gave alumni the opportunity to catch-up with classmates and friends and reminisce about their favorite memories.

The spectacular weekend came to a close on Sunday morning with the inaugural Pancakes with the President Brunch, where President Caprio and members of his leadership team served the guests delicious brunch favorites in the new University Commons.



Hampden Hall brings the heat!



The Hon. Michael B. Powers L'82 (pictured with Nancy Shea) received the School of Law Dean's Alumni Excellence Award



The Class of 1968 50th Reunion



Students perform at the Donor Recognition Brunch



Law Alumni and Students of Color Dinner Keynote Speaker Jodie Roure L'97 with Dean Sudha Setty



Alumni and students enjoyed the U&ME/MGA Reunion Dinner Dance



Pancakes with the President Brunch

SEE MORE PHOTOS
FROM GOLDEN BEAR
WEEKEND
WNE.EDU/ALUMNI



Women's Athletic Alumnae Brunch



School of Law Class of 1988 30th Reunion





Golden Bear Legends Honored

BY MARY MCLEAN ORSZULAK G'10



EVERY INSTITUTION HAS ITS LEADERS

and legends and at Western New England University, Coach Arthur William “Red” Downes embodies both. After 50 years of coaching Golden Bear teams, including 33 years at the helm of the men’s golf team, Coach Downes retired this May. At the 2018 Undergraduate Commencement Ceremony, President Anthony S. Caprio honored Coach Downes with a President’s Medallion. Downes’ final season at Western New England was a memorable one, as he led the Golden Bears to their fourth CCC title and third appearance in the NCAA Division III Championship.

Coach Downes joined the University in 1968 and advanced through the athletics and academic ranks. He resurrected the

varsity golf program in the 1980s and built it into one of the strongest Division III programs in the region. In addition to golf, he coached soccer, basketball, and baseball while serving as Professor of Physical Education until retiring from the faculty in 2000, when he was named Professor Emeritus. He was one of the first inductees into the University’s Athletics Hall of Fame, which now bears his name.

At a ceremony in July, Trustee Mike Flynn ‘82/G’83 and members of the Downes Athletic Hall of Fame also honored Coach Downes for his 50 years of coaching and dedication to Golden Bear athletics. Flynn has created a giving challenge, pledging to match up to \$10,000 of gifts donated to a fund created in the coach’s honor. 🐾

DOWNES ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME INDUCTS CLASS OF 2018

During Golden Bear Weekend at the October 19 Downes Hall of Fame Induction ceremony, four Western New England University legends were welcomed into the Downes Athletic Hall of Fame. Class of 2018 inductees included Michael O’Connor ‘03 (men’s basketball), Katharina Boes Hiergeist ‘11 (women’s volleyball), and Tim Larocca ‘07 (men’s soccer). Professor of History John Anzalotti (contributor) was also honored for his support of the Athletics program.

Learn more about these legendary Hall of Famers at wnegoldenbears.com.

To honor Coach Downes with a gift, visit wne.edu/thefund and click “In Honor Of” and write Coach Downes’ name in the form.

OPPORTUNITIES CAN YOU SEE THEM?

Be an alert driver on the road towards excellence.

BY J.A. RODRIGUEZ JR. '83, CSP, SGE

High-performing teams redefine excellence at the point where realization and achievement intersect. It is at this juncture where opportunity is at its peak and readily accessible for those who can see it and diligently work hard to make it their own.

Maybe today? Maybe tomorrow? Opportunities. Will they come or will they go? So often these questions are asked, but so infrequently are they answered. Yet for some seemingly lucky people, opportunities seem to be there, always present, and never-ending. The answers to these questions are likely sequestered within the confines of your vision or blindness and the interrelationship between each as they interact in a delicate balance that produces outcomes and results; expected and unexpected.

Opportunity is the delta between optimism by chance thinking and optimism by design action. Seeing opportunities is about adopting a mindset powered by objectivity, positivity, openness, and the realization that there are gaps, often

significant, in every process, every situation, and in everything we do or do not do.

The road towards excellence starts with acting on those opportunities by implementing the four "B"s of business: be brief, be prepared, be inspiring, and be gone. Be brief means get to the point, effectively communicate and demonstrate that you understand and respect the value of time. Be prepared means do the research, get the right facts at the right time, learn the language of your organization and speak it, and understand the value and art of perspective discovery and expectation management. Be inspiring means being pumped about your career, your project, your team because if you are not, no one else will be either—passion is highly contagious. Be gone means go sell your idea, proposal or improvement plan. Get it done! Make commitments and deliver on those commitments. Be gone means being invisible as you work towards achieving your organization's mission. Let your work do the talking.

The journey continues with building an amazing reputation, one driven by superior performance and trust. Pave this road with powerful partnerships empowered by collaboration as a gateway to sustainable success. Learn the language of finance as it is the universal language of business. Invest in yourself, and learn to understand and converse in your organization's financial terms.

In the end, there is a solution to everything; simply find it (see it) and make it happen because you are the driver on the road towards excellence.



DARE TO THINK DIFFERENTLY

J.A. Rodriguez Jr. '83, CSP, SGE is a global senior leader for Raytheon Company's \$6+ billion Intelligence, Information and Services (IIS) business. He leads the Environmental, Health, Safety and Sustainability (EHSS) organization for Raytheon IIS at 550+ sites in 100 countries. Rodriguez develops and implements enterprise-wide, solution-focused EHSS strategies that capitalize on performance excellence. He has been elected as the new chairman of the Voluntary Protection Programs Participants' Association (VPPPA) Board of Directors. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering from Western New England University. 🐾



on the rise

BY KEN CERINO



When **Mike Sugermeyer** became the part-time wrestling coach at Western New England three years ago, he employed a simple

philosophy to get the Golden Bears back on the winning track. Appointed head coach in July, his philosophy has made Golden Bear Wrestling a rising contender in the New England Wrestling Association (NEWA).

"We are looking for student-athletes who want to embrace a championship lifestyle in everything that they do. Our mission is to provide our student-athletes with the best possible experience, in an environment where they can achieve their goals in the classroom, on the wrestling mat, and in life," Sugermeyer stated.

Coach Sugermeyer's hard work paid off as the Golden Bears went 9-7 in 2018 for their first winning season in 19 years. The team has had 28 victories in the past three years, the most since 1998-2000.

A strong recruiter, Sugermeyer had a large squad with 28 student-athletes this past winter. Sophomore John Boyle (pictured at top) posted a 37-7 record (13 pins) in the 184-lb. weight class and took fourth

at the NCAA Division III Championship to become the school's ninth All-American and first in 21 years.

Boyle and senior Tim McLinden (both Electrical Engineering majors), and sophomore Ryan Guers (Communication) made the National Wrestling Coaches Association (NWCA) All-Academic Team.

Nick Newell '08 is among several graduates who have fared well after graduation. He is one of the top Ultimate Fighting Performers despite having a lower limb difference.

Sugermeyer's gameplan shows no signs of slowing down as he looks to another top season in 2018-19.

DECADES OF DOMINANCE Western New England was a dominant force for parts of three decades under Hall of Fame coach Bob Skelton who started the program in the mid-1970s. The program struggled following Skelton's retirement in 2004 and the roster size dwindled considerably.

Enter Mike Sugermeyer, who graduated from Rhode Island College in 2013 where he gained All-NCAA Northeast and New England recognition. He was an assistant with the Golden Bears in 2014 and 2015.

Wrestling runs in the Sugermeyer household. Mike's father Stephen '78/G'80 was

a member of the inaugural squad and first captain in 1976. He was inducted into the Downes Athletic Hall of Fame in 2013 and is a professional educator of accounting at the University.

"Each year we continue to raise the bar as we work towards our ultimate goal of bringing an NCAA Division III Championship trophy home to Western New England University. With the addition of a solid recruiting class to an already talented group of returners, along with the continued support that we receive from our alumni and administration, the future is very bright for Golden Bear wrestling," says Coach Sugermeyer. 🐻

TEAM HIGHLIGHTS 🏆

Finished **fifth** among 13 teams at the Ursinus (PA) Invitational

Eighth among 18 schools at the Springfield Invitational

Ninth among 17 schools at the NCAA Division III Northeast Regional

Follow this year's team at wnegoldenbears.com/sports/wrest.

ALUMNI NEWS



Alumni Association Welcomes New President and Members

The University's Alumni Association welcomed a new president on July 1, Alison Castellano '03. Castellano has volunteered at the University for more than a decade and has served on the Board since 2012. As a student, Castellano was heavily involved on

campus as a soccer player, class officer, peer advisor, and orientation group leader. The Association also welcomed three new Board Members and announced new positions for several returning members.



Law Alumni Board Installs New Leadership

The Law Alumni Board of Directors welcomed a new president, Jonathan Longobardi L'10, in October. Jon is an attorney with Neubert Pepe & Monteith, P.C., in New Haven, CT, where he works in the firm's insurance law and litigation practice groups. As a student, he served

on *Western New England Law Review* and was named the Student Bar Association Representative of the Year. The Board also installed seven members at its October meeting, including four new and three returning.

School of Law Alumni Sworn in Before United States Supreme Court



On October 29, Western New England University was pleased to host 12 law alumni for a group swearing in at the United States Supreme Court in Washington, DC. President Anthony S. Caprio and School of Law Dean Sudha Setty joined participants for a breakfast in the Supreme Court where they met Justices of the Court. Afterward, Professor of Law Bruce Miller brought forth the motion to swear in the participants: Dean Sudha Setty, Jonathan Goldsmith L'86, Scott Holman L'89, Darlene Karis L'98, Lisa Lippiello L'06, John Looney L'76, Elizabeth Lovejoy L'07, Adam Mandell L'06, David Ostrander L'89, Thomas Pratt L'88, Rebecca Simser L'10, and Cheryl Smith L'83.



ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BOARD

- Alison Castellano '03
President
- Kevin McKiernan G'97
Vice President
- Laura Madaio '13
Secretary
- Ed Lavoie '99
Immediate Past President
- Courtney Chafer '14/G'16
- Tim Conrod '11/G'12
- David Greenslade '14/G'15
- Rob Madrid G'09
- Steven Tremblay '87/G'91

LAW ALUMNI BOARD

- Jon Longobardi L'10
President
- Talia Gee L'10/G'12
Immediate Past President
- Karen Adamski L'14
- Jessica Audet L'06
- Sara Behuniak L'17
- Kristin Bonneau L'04
- Michael Borg L'88
- Stephen Button L'06
- Tasheena Davis L'15
- Justin Dion L'00
- Linda Fakhoury L'04
- Lisa Foley L'02
- Chad G. Greiner L'10
- Kaley Lentini L'14
- Lisa Lippiello L'06
- Adam Mandell L'06
- Tasha Marshall L'16
- Nicole Murray L'05
- Ed Pikula L'83
- Shaune Sousa '13/L'16

Read more alumni news at wne.edu/alumni. Follow @WNEalumni



Alumni Events Create Connections

Western New England events strengthen the lifelong connection between alumni and the University by keeping alumni informed, providing networking and learning opportunities, and fostering pride. Over the course of the upcoming year, the Alumni Association will host more than 80 events, including centennial celebrations, affinity reunions to bring alumni with shared experiences together, regional social/networking events across the country, career and mentoring events to support current students and

alumni, community service activities, and volunteer programs to engage alumni in the work of the campus.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

For a listing of upcoming events, visit wne.edu/alumni.

Alumni Association Recognizes Student Excellence with the Skookum Awards

On September 23, the Alumni Association honored 15 exceptional students with the Skookum Award. Honorees were recognized for excellence in academics, cocurricular activities, athletics, volunteer work, and community service. Matthew Koslowski, a Leadership and Management major, was presented with this year's Grand Skookum Award, the highest honor. Alex Fletcher (Pre-pharmacy) and Jimmy Sullivan (History) received Royal Skookum Awards, the second-highest accolade.

During the event, Bryan Dickinson '12 (History), pictured with faculty mentor Dr. John Baick, was presented with the 2018 Young Alumni Outstanding Achievement Award. Bryan is a Math teacher at South

Valley Academy in Albuquerque, NM. Recently, Dickinson received a Fulbright Distinguished Award in Teaching grant from the U.S. Department of State and the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board.

Read about this year's honorees at wne.edu/alumni.



Skookum Award Recipients (L-R) Bottom row: D'Naysia Stonick, James Sullivan, Alexandra Summa, Daniel Paradiso, Melissa Montalvo, and Megan Pantos. Middle row: London Green, Caitlyn Marchand, and Joseph Strid. Top row: Michael Ciofalo, Matthew Koslowski, Kenneth Stratton, Brendan Kaljulaid, Patrick Tierney, and Alexander Fletcher.



Class Notes

STAY CONNECTED

Your classmates want to know about the milestones in your life. Send your news including weddings, births, career changes, publications, accomplishments, and more to the Office of Alumni Relations at alumwne@wne.edu.

1970s

STANLEY LIGHT L'77 (JD) was elected department commander of the Department of Massachusetts Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America.

THOMAS BOWMAN L'79 (JD) has retired as deputy secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Previously he worked as the staff director for the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee.

1980s

BRIAN ADE L'80 (JD) was named to the 2018 New Jersey Super Lawyers list as a Top Rated Products Liability Attorney.

BRAD LEWIN L'80 (JD) retired from Pfizer Inc. where he was corporate counsel. He started a consulting firm to provide legal assistance on contract preparation, review, and negotiation in the greater New York City area.

DONNA CRAIG L'82 (JD) was admitted as a member of the bar of the Supreme Court of the United States by a motion accepted by Chief Justice John Roberts.

RICHARD HANCHETT '82 (Government) was promoted to senior vice president and commercial loan officer at Westfield Bank in Springfield, MA.

NANCY ALISBERG L'83 (JD) was hired as the legal director of Disability Rights Connecticut, Inc., a new protection and advocacy agency dedicated to improving the lives of people with disabilities.

MITCHELL SHAHEN L'83 (JD) was elected to a county judge position in Beaver County, PA, after many years as a Beaver County attorney.

JOANNE BEAUREGARD '84 (Accounting) was promoted to financial vice president at O'Connell Companies in Holyoke, MA. She previously served as controller.

STEVEN COTE '85 (Electrical Engineering) has retired from the U.S. Air Force after 36 years of civil service and has opened Spellbinde Consulting, LLC which supports companies seeking federal contracts.

THOMAS NAGLE '85 (History) has retired from the West Hartford Police Department after more than 20 years of service. He was also honored with a merit award in recognition of his service to the Town of West Hartford. He is now a part of the security team for the Hartford Yard Goats.

WILLIAM NAGEL '85/G'99 (Management/MBA) was appointed principal of Moosup Elementary School in Moosup, CT.

JULIA DURCHANEK L'86 (JD) is practicing in the area of probate law, guardianship & conservatorship in the Holyoke, MA area. She is also president of the South Hadley, MA Lions Club.

DOUGLAS HEMBDT '86 (Electrical Engineering) was selected for the department of the Navy Meritorious Civilian Service Award, the third highest Navy honorary award.

DONNA TODD RIVERS L'86 (JD) was hired as a recruiter by The Berkshire County Regional Employment Board. She is also a small-business owner and independent benefits professional.

ANDREW CAIRES '87 (Accounting) was named chief financial officer and vice president of administration at Pathlight in Springfield, MA. He was previously the controller for the Williston Northampton School.

BRIAN CANTOR L'87 (JD) moderated a panel discussion on Airbnb Law: "The Implications of Short-Term Rentals for Property Owners and Municipalities" at The Connecticut Bar Association's Connecticut Legal Conference.

THOMAS MANZI '87 (Finance) has been elected to the board of directors for the Springfield Rescue Mission, an organization that helps serve the homeless in Springfield, MA.

JOHN MUTCHLER G'87 (Engineering Management) has joined the law firm Murtha Cullina LLP, where he is a member of the intellectual property practice group in Hartford, CT.

VINCENT BROWN III '88 (Government) was honored at Westfield State University's 10th Annual SANKOFA Stoling Ceremony for his hard work and efforts for diversity and inclusion.

ELLEN FREYMAN L'88 (JD) was named the 2018 Richard J. Moriarty Citizen of the Year by the Springfield, MA Regional Chamber for her selfless devotion to the local community.

ROBERT SACCO L'88 (JD) was sworn in as president of the Hampden County Bar Association in Holyoke, MA, for the 2018-19 year.

PAUL CACCAVIELLO L'89 (JD) was sworn in as Berkshire (MA) District Attorney earlier this year.

WENDY DEVENISH '89 (Finance) was appointed relationship management and international banking executive at Santander Bank N.A. in New York, NY.

RONALD MILLER '89 (Computer Engineering) has joined Nrbv as vice president, product management. He previously worked with Espial, located in the greater Chicago area.

1990s

ALFREDO DIMAURO JR. G'90 (MBA) was hired as project director at Pinck & Co. Inc. He was previously assistant vice president for facilities at Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

ALARIC FOX L'90 (JD) was named the Enfield, CT police chief. He previously served as a colonel in the state police.

ROBERT HERMAN L'90 (JD) celebrated 25 years as an assistant prosecutor in Ashtabula County, OH in addition to 28 years working in a private practice.

HOWARD BAROUXIS G'91 (MBA) was appointed sales director for the North American region at Broadpeak. He was previously a major accounts executive at Harmonic.

MICHELLE O'MALLEY '91 (Human Resource Management) is currently the executive director of the March of Dimes in New Hampshire, following 20 years in higher education.

BERNARD ST. GEORGE '91/G'02 (Management/Criminal Justice Administration) was honored at Westfield State University's 10th Annual SANKOFA Stoling Ceremony for his hard work and efforts toward diversity and inclusion.

MARK WYSK '91/G'98 (Mechanical Engineering/Engineering Management) was named director of global supply chain at Guardair Corp. in Chicopee, MA, where he will support manufacturing through sourcing strategies and improving productivity.

FRANK ZANGHI, JR. G'91 (MBA) was added to the board of directors for IC Federal Credit Union as a supervisory board member. He is currently the president and owner of Incase Inc., located in Hopedale, MA.

JOHN HENRY L'92 (JD) is now a co-managing partner for the firm Whiteman, Osterman & Hanna in Albany, NY. He has been an associate at the firm since 1994.

LISA MARRELLO L'92 (JD) has been selected for inclusion on "The 2018 Albany Power 100" list by *City & State NY*. She currently works as the managing principal for the Albany office of Jackson Lewis P.C.

XAVIER BOZA '93 (Management) was appointed as senior vice president, chief human resources officer at Campbell Soup Company.

CAROL SIMPSON L'93 (JD) has been named new chief compliance officer for the not-for-profit Anderson Center for Autism of Staatsburg, NY.

NICOLE CHILSON '94 (Psychology) was named human resource generalist at Sunshine Village in Chicopee, MA.

STEPHEN BUONICONTI L'95 (JD) was appointed as Agawam's city solicitor. He is a former county prosecutor, state representative, and senator.

JOHN NASCI L'95 (JD) is currently a hearing officer for the NYS Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs.

JAMIE REARDON '95 (Criminal Justice) was promoted to sergeant in the Amherst, MA Police Department after serving as a longtime police detective with the department.

D. SUSANNE SNEARLY L'95 (JD) was named a New England Super Lawyer in the practice of family law for the 9th consecutive year. She is also a Fellow of the American Bar Foundation.

VICTORIA VELTRI L'95 (JD) was appointed as executive director of the state's Office of Health Strategy in Hartford, CT, by Governor Dannel P. Malloy.

LAWRENCE WEST G'95 (MBA) was hired as chief operating officer of RiVidium Inc. (dba TripleCyber) in Manassas, VA. He was previously president and chief executive officer of Poseidon Group, LLC.

ROBERT CLARK '96 (Finance) has been named vice chairman of Adirondack Bank's board of directors. He was elected to the board in 2002 and is currently the bank's executive vice president.

JAY SEYLER G'96 (MBA) was hired as vice president, business banking officer at PeoplesBank in Holyoke, MA.

RITA AQUILIO L'97 (JD) was selected to moderate the American Bar Association Section of Litigation Family Law Litigation Committee roundtable.

JOHN BUES L'97 (JD) was named to the board of directors of the Cleary School for the Deaf in Long Island, NY.

JONATHAN FORTIN L'97 (JD) has joined Heritage Wealth Advisors as director of tax services in their Fredericksburg, VA office. He previously worked with Deloitte.

PATRICK CARNEVALE G'98 (MBA) was named director of Governor Charlie Baker's Western Massachusetts office in Springfield, MA.

KERRY SOCHA L'98 (JD) announced her candidacy for judge for Ellington District Probate Court in Ellington, CT.

KEITH WETJEN L'99 (JD) was taken on as a certified financial planner for Private Capital Group, LLC in West Hartford, CT.

2000s

JOELLA FORTIER L'01 (JD) was nominated to be the clerk magistrate at Orange District County in Orange, MA.

DIANE KELLY G'01 (MBA) was named chief operating officer of Greenwich Hospital and will serve as senior vice president for Yale New Haven Health, both in Connecticut.

JOANNE NICHING '01 (Management) was hired as the library director of the Somerset, MA Public Library. She previously served as circulation supervisor for the East Longmeadow, MA Public Library.

SARAH MOSIER '02 (History) received a doctorate of education from Johnson and Wales University in May of 2018.

ROSS EVANS '03 (Management) has opened the first café for Carrier Roasting Co., a company he cofounded in Northfield, VT.

ERIC SMALL '04 (Management) was hired as a territory sales manager at Wraser Pharmaceutical in Ridgeland, MS.

MICHAEL LEEDBERG L'04 (JD) has been named partner at Pierce Davis & Perritano LLP in Boston, MA. His work is primarily focused on litigation defense and trial advocacy in courts of Massachusetts and Connecticut.

JOCELYN ROBY L'04 (JD) has joined Bacon Wilson, P.C. as an associate attorney in Hadley, MA. Her practice focuses on residential real estate.

LEANNA POLIDORO '04/G'05 (Accounting/MSA) was selected to attend the AICPA's 2018 Leadership Academy.

ROBERT SMALL '04 (Liberal Studies) was appointed chief of the Rochester, MA Police Department. He has been an officer with the branch since 1998.

LORI JARRETT '05/G'11 (Accounting/MSA) was named assistant controller at Florence Bank in Florence, MA.

JASON POOLE '05 (English) was named Clay County District's 2019 Teacher of the Year. He currently teaches at Fleming High School in Fleming, FL, where he has been teaching since 2006.

KRISTA NEVIL '05 (International Studies) is currently employed for the State University of New York in the registrations office of student services at Columbia-Greene Community College.

JENNIFER LOPEZ '06 (English) became the marketing manager for LUSO Federal Credit Union in Ludlow, MA.

DENNIS CARROLL '07 (JD) inherited his father's tax practice, Carroll Tax Firm, Inc., in Windsor, CT.

KATHRYN WAKEFIELD L'07 (JD) has joined Bulkley, Richardson, and Gelinas LLP (MA) as a counsel in trusts and estates.

CHRISTOPHER WILCOX '07 (Sport Management) a commercial loan officer at Lowell Five Bank in Nashua, NH, has joined the Front Door Agency board of directors.

JUSTIN GORMAN L'08 (JD) has joined UCB, Inc. as counsel.

SPENCER STONE L'08 (JD) was promoted to counsel of the business and finance department at Halloran & Sage. He currently represents clients in real estate and other commercial transactions.

ALEXANDRA PATERSON '08 (Political Science) was promoted to director of orientation, new student, and family program and coordinator of veterans services at Suffolk University.

TAYLOR BOUCHARD WALLIN L'09 (JD) was named a partner of FMBK, LLP, one of the largest family law firms in California.

KATHLEEN DION L'09 (JD) was named to *BusinessWest's* Forty Under 40. She is currently a litigator at Robinson & Cole LLP in Connecticut.

MIKE MELUCCI '09 (History) was promoted to plaintiff attorney at Yeager LaNasa Tauzier LLC in New Orleans, LA, where he specializes in personal injury and construction law cases.

ROBERT "BOBBY" BIELSKY '09 (Sport Management) was hired as a business consultant for Contactix Solutions Inc. in New Jersey.

JOSH WEINSHANK L'09/LLM'10 (JD/Estate Planning & Elder Law) led the expansion of the law firm Cramer & Anderson with the establishment of a new branch in his hometown of Ridgefield, CT.

2010s

ERIN COUTURE G'11 (MBA) was presented the Community Support Award from Florence Bank (MA) for her service to local nonprofit organizations.

ALEX DION '11 (Management) was hired as assistant coach for Worcester, MA Bravehearts.

COLIN HOULIHAN '12 (Communication) was hired as a police officer in Yorktown, NY.

JOSEPH MARTIN '12 (Finance) was named head men's lacrosse coach at Skidmore College. He previously served as the director of lacrosse operations at the University of North Carolina.

STEVEN RODRIGUEZ '12 (Psychology) was hired at Park Square Realty in West Springfield as a sales associate.

SHAUN KELLY '12/G'15 (Management/MBA) was hired as senior consultant for EY in Hartford, CT.

CHRISTOPHER CLEVELAND G'14 (Secondary Education) was appointed director of Storm Lake's Iowa Central Community College campus in Fort Dodge, IA.

BHUWAN GAUTAM '14 (Integrated Liberal Studies) was named to *BusinessWest's* Forty Under 40 for his work with nonprofits in western Massachusetts and Nepal.

MEAGHAN MURPHY L'14 (JD) has joined Bacon and Wilson in Springfield, MA as an associate attorney in the litigation department, where she concentrates on labor and employment law.

DAVID JACOBS '15/G'17 (Management/MBA) has accepted a position as a financial analyst at FCB New York, an NYC ad agency.

TESSA JORDAN G'15 (Accounting) was elected as a firm partner at Nicola, Yester & Company, P.C. after practicing accounting and auditing for private businesses with the company for seven years.

SYED ZAIN ALI L'15 (JD) has been hired as associate counsel at W20 Group in New York City.

CONNER AMARAL '15/G'17 (Accounting/MSA) was hired as staff accountant at Charland, Marciano & Company, CPAs, LLP in Providence, RI. Previously, he was a staff accountant with Terrance A. Charest, CPA PC.

HILARY SULLIVAN L'15 (JD) was appointed an associate at Esser Kent, PC, a firm specializing in family law, elder law, and estate planning in Greenfield, MA.

LINDSAY BARRON G'16 (MBA) was named to *BusinessWest's* Forty Under 40 list for her work in the mortgage industry.

AMANDA CARPE L'16 (JD) has joined the Gove Law Office as an associate attorney concentrating on real estate transactions, planning, and administration. She interned with the office during law school.

STEPHANIE ELIZONDO '16 (English) was hired as social media specialist for Dominion Dealer Solutions.

ASHLEY HAAS '16 (Forensic Biology) became a crime lab scientist in the impressions unit of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation in Atlanta, GA.

MARLEY KNYSH '16 (Criminal Justice) was hired as a victim assistant advocate at Berkshire County District Attorney's Office in Pittsfield, MA.

SABRINA LYESIUK '16 (Accounting) was promoted from staff accountant to senior accountant at Melanson Heath in Boston, MA.

SARAH NORMANDIE L'16 (JD) was selected as a contract analyst for the State of Connecticut Office of Legislative Management/Connecticut General Assembly.

MATTHEW SCAVARDA '16 (Civil Engineering) was promoted to engineer II for the Water/Wastewater Group at Barton & Loguidice D.P.C. in Newburgh, NY.

ALISHA SULLIVAN L'16 (JD) was named the chair of Connecticut Bar Association-Young Lawyers Section Tax Committee. She was also awarded the Star of the Year Award in recognition of her previous role as co-chair of the Women in the Law Committee.

SEE MORE ONLINE

For even more Class Notes and our In Memoriam listing of alumni and community members who have recently passed away, view the online version of WNE Magazine at magazine.wne.edu.

Marriages



6. Mosier



4. Cicero



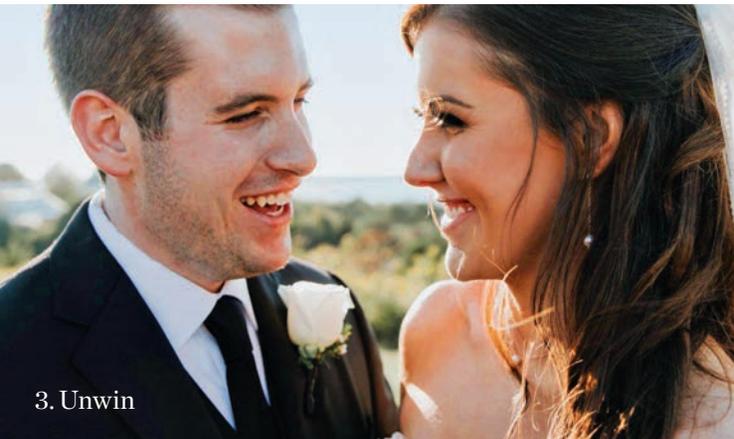
5. Kenny and Vogel



2. Bielsky & McNatt



7. Kravic & Mears



3. Unwin



1. Dudzinski and Gauvin

1. **RYAN DUDZINSKI '11** and **ELYSE GAUVIN '11**, September 3, 2017 in Bristol, RI
2. **ROBERT BIELSKY '09** and **MEGAN MCNATT '10**, September 10, 2017 in Mystic, CT
3. **TYLER UNWIN '14** and Devon Correll, October 1, 2017 in Newport, RI
4. **DAVID CICERO '13** and Ashley Sutherland, October 7, 2017 in South Windsor, CT
5. **COLBY KENNY '15** and **SARAH VOGEL '15**, October 8, 2017 in Myrtle Beach, SC
6. **SARAH MOSIER '02** and Gabe Fillion, October 28, 2017 in Keene, NH
7. **JAMES KRAVIC '13** and **JENNIFER MEARS '13**, June 22, 2018 in Saugerties, NY

Baby Golden Bears

1. Elliot, February 8, 2017 and Sophia, June 11, 2018 to **SHERWIN VARGAS '14** and Liz Silva
2. Carson, January 31, 2018, to **MOLLY (DONOVAN) MCGARRY '13** and Matt McGarry
3. Vivian Jean, February 28, 2018, to **CHRISTINA (LONGTO) BORDEN '10/G'11** and **STEVEN BORDEN '10**
4. Chase Jakob, March 6, 2018 to **LINDSAY MAGUIRE '04** and **DYLAN WHITE '05**
5. Logan James, May 7, 2018, to **PATRICIA (WILECZEK) GECKLE '10/G'12** and **ERICH GECKLE '10**
6. Maxwell Douglas, May 23, 2018 to **KELLY (GARRITY) MARBLE '06** and **STEVEN MARBLE '04**
7. Madelaine Rose, June 12, 2018, to **KRISTI (LAPRADE) GENDRON '08/G'10** and **BRIAN GENDRON '08**
8. Grayson Michael, July 10, 2018, to **DANIELLE (CWIEKOWSKI) MATERKOWSKI '10** and **JASON MATERKOWSKI '09**
9. Emerson Rae, July 14, 2018 to **JODY LEMOI '02/G'04** and Kristen Lemoi



1. Sophia



9. Emerson Rae



1. Elliot



2. Carson



3. Vivian Jean



8. Grayson Michael



4. Chase Jakob



7. Madelaine Rose



5. Logan James



6. Maxwell Douglas

YOU'VE WALKED IN THEIR SHOES.
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A HEAD START.**



Remember how you felt the first time you walked onto the Western New England campus and fell in love with it?

Then, you stepped back and wondered, "Can I afford to go here?" Fortunately for you, there were alumni and friends of the University to support your dreams. Their gifts helped fund student needs and gave you the opportunity to experience all that Western New England had to offer.

Today, as you look back at how far your education has taken you, please consider making a gift to help those who are following in your footsteps.

Big. Small. Or any size, your gift to The Fund for Western New England University will help today's students take the next step.

**Give now at
wne.edu/thefund.**



DRIVING FORCE *of The Four*

Michelle DeBellis '09 Thrives on the Thrill of Live Television

BY ALEX LYMAN '12/G'16

Seven years ago, Michelle DeBellis '09 made the connection of a lifetime while working at a Long Island, New York restaurant. That chance meeting was with a producer on *American Idol* (back when it aired on FOX), who was also the COO of 19 Entertainment. He then invited her in for a job interview that landed her a position as a talent coordinator and music manager for the show. Within one month, DeBellis packed her bags and moved to Los Angeles to begin her adventure in the entertainment industry.

That was just the beginning for DeBellis. Since then, she has worked as a field producer, filming rehearsal packages on *Dancing with the Stars*; stepped up her position to a producer on *Idol* (this time with ABC); and currently works as a producer on the hit show *The Four: Battle for Stardom*.

Her role on *The Four* spans the show's entire season. She invites potential contestants to an unaired audition, and later delivers the news about their future on the show. Once a contestant makes it to the live show, DeBellis becomes akin to their manager. She learns the contestants' backstories and goals, which helps the story team create the introductory packages aired on the show. DeBellis also advises

contestants on wardrobe, stage notes, and musical arrangements with the band so that everything goes smoothly during episode tapings.

"My job is to become friends with them," she explains. "I'm the person they feel safe with. If they aren't comfortable, or if something great has happened, I'm the person they come to. I set the tone for their performances, which is important, because it reflects back on the live show."



On show day, DeBellis stays backstage with the contestants, providing moral support and coaching them on different scenarios that could play out live.

"I really enjoy being a part of helping people's dreams come true," she says. "Whatever their story is, they all have a

dream to make it big and they're using this show as a platform. I get genuinely invested in their journey."

While the entertainment industry seems elusive to many, DeBellis maintains her success through commitment, passion, and true attention to personal relationships. Her B.A. in Communication from Western New England gave her the technical foundation needed to get the job done, and the busy college schedule prepared her for 18-hour show days and the chaos that tends to ensue.

Her jobs on three major network television shows gave her experience in casting, camera operation, interviewing, music clearance, and segment creation, to name a few. However, general soft skills are equally as important, such as clear communication, compassion, and grace under pressure.

"At the end of the day, you need to go into the job interview and explain what you bring to the table," she says. "You need to sell yourself." 🐾



DeBellis with Fergie, host of *The Four*.

Our Celebrations Begin

January 1, 2019 marks the beginning of Western New England University's Centennial Year. It will be a year of ongoing celebration as we look back at our historic first century and forward to a bright future. Join us in honoring this proud moment in the history of our University.



*ONE HISTORIC
CENTURY*

100 YEARS
WESTERN NEW ENGLAND
UNIVERSITY 2019

*ONE BRIGHT
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