

WNE

Magazine

WINTER 2024



***GOLDEN BEARS
COME HOME***





Winter '24

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WNE

Magazine

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

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65	5.7%	\$1,425	\$8,524
70	6.3%	\$1,575	\$9,145
75	7.0%	\$1,750	\$10,195
80	8.1%	\$2,025	\$11,213
85	9.1%	\$2,275	\$13,150

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AGE	ANNUITY RATE	ANNUAL PAYMENT	CHARITABLE DEDUCTION
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65/67	5.1%	\$1,275	\$7,844
70/75	5.8%	\$1,450	\$8,259
75/77	6.3%	\$1,575	\$8,823
80/78	6.8%	\$1,700	\$9,378

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Momentum for the Future: Embracing Growth and Opportunity

BY ROBERT E. JOHNSON



As winter approaches, I reflect with gratitude on the incredible momentum our WNE community has built this past year. It has been a season of growth and innovation, setting the stage for even greater achievements.

This fall, we welcomed our largest and most diverse first-year class. These talented students are already making their mark, embodying the spirit of curiosity, collaboration, and leadership that defines WNE. Our faculty and staff continue to deliver transformative, hands-on learning experiences that prepare students for the future of work.

We are also excited to announce the completion of the Kevin S. Delbridge Career Center, a dynamic hub for students, faculty, and the community to collaborate. Thanks to the unwavering support of Kevin S. Delbridge '77/H'19 and his wife Sandra E. Delbridge, this new facility will

nurture the entrepreneurial spirit at the heart of WNE, providing key resources for student success beyond graduation.

Our Golden Bears have had a remarkable athletics season, demonstrating dedication and sportsmanship. Senior Matt Provost clocked a historic 8K cross country run, four teams reached the Conference of New England (CNE) tournament, and three of them – men's soccer, field hockey, and volleyball – made it to the semifinal round. Men's soccer finished up their home slate with a thrilling tournament victory in penalty kicks to advance, while volleyball's 21-8 overall record was their best winning percentage in over a decade. Their achievements both on and off the field, reflect the balance we strive for between academics and extracurricular excellence.

Finally, I want to extend my sincere thanks to our alumni - especially the more than 1,000 of you I met during Golden Bear

Weekend. Your mentorship, support, and contributions to scholarships have made a real difference in the lives of our students. As we look ahead to 2025, I am confident that our collective efforts will propel WNE to even greater heights.

Thank you for being a vital part of the WNE family. I wish you a joyful holiday season and look forward to connecting in the coming year.

CAMPUS NEWS

For the latest news from Western New England University, visit wne.edu/news.

FORENSIC BIOLOGY PROGRAM RANKED IN NATION'S TOP 15

The College of Arts & Sciences' forensic biology program has been named one of the top 15 in the U.S. by ForensicsColleges.com, recognizing the school's excellence in combining theoretical knowledge with hands-on experience.

The program prepares students for careers in forensic sciences, offering access to state-of-the-art facilities in the Center for the Sciences and Pharmacy, as well as partnerships with institutions like Brigham & Women's Hospital Morgue, and the Suffolk Crime Lab where students gain invaluable experience applying scientific methods to real-world investigations.

"Our mission is to provide students with both the academic and practical skills necessary for success," said Marcus Davis, PhD, dean of the

College of Arts and Sciences. Students benefit from an interdisciplinary approach, merging biology with law, including mock trials where they deliver expert testimony.

Directed by Associate Professors of Forensic Sciences, Georgiana Gibson-Daw, PhD, and Na Liu, PhD, the program offers a robust catalog of internship opportunities through community partnerships. Graduates often pursue roles in crime labs, medical examiners' offices, or advanced studies in fields like biology and medicine. The program's strong reputation reflects WNE's commitment to preparing students for a growing forensic science field, projected to expand by 27% in the coming years.



PROFESSOR GEORGIANNA MELENDEZ HONORED FOR LEADERSHIP

Georgianna Melendez, PhD, assistant professor of management in Western New England University's College of Business, has been named to the 2024 Amplify LatinX (ALX) 100 list. This honor recognizes 100 influential Latino leaders in Massachusetts who have made significant contributions to their communities and fields.

Melendez is a seasoned academic and organizational leader, specializing in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), organizational behavior, and human resource management. Her research explores the intersections of gender, race, and power in organizations. She teaches courses at the University on leadership, team dynamics, and managing diverse workforces.

"Georgianna Melendez embodies leadership and service on campus and beyond," said Sharienne Walker, PhD, dean of the College of Business. "Her

inclusion in the ALX 100 reflects her lasting impact on students and the Latine community."

Previously, Melendez served as assistant chancellor and chief diversity officer at UMass Boston, and assistant commissioner for strategic development at the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance. She also mentors Latine leaders through the nonprofit group Conexión and has served on the Governor's Economic Assistance Coordinating Council for six years.

Melendez's career spans public service, academia, and nonprofit sectors, with a focus on DEI, community development, and domestic violence advocacy. Her research includes studies on entrepreneurship in post-disaster Puerto Rico and the role of meritocracy.



ENGINEERING CONTINUES TRAJECTORY OF EXCELLENCE

2024 has been a year of achievements for the College of Engineering, positioning it as a leader in innovation, education, and workforce development. Key among these is an \$850,000 earmark, secured by Congressman Richard E. Neal, to establish the Center for Advanced Manufacturing Systems (CAMS). This center will serve as a regional hub for advanced manufacturing training and innovation, strengthening Western New England University's (WNE) collaborations with local industry partners and enhancing students' hands-on training.

WNE's College of Engineering also earned a Top 100 ranking in the 2025 *U.S. News & World Report* Best Undergraduate Engineering Programs. This ranking reflects WNE's excellence across multiple indicators, including faculty credentials and student outcomes.



Additionally, the College recently received reaccreditation from the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET), ensuring that all six programs meet industry standards for producing highly skilled graduates.

These initiatives, coupled with a 100% internship placement rate and a 96% employment rate for 2023 graduates, demonstrates WNE's commitment to preparing students for leadership

roles in sectors such as aerospace, healthcare, and manufacturing.

Through CAMS, cutting-edge programs, and strong industry partnerships, WNE continues to drive technological innovation and economic growth, while ensuring its graduates are equipped to succeed in the evolving global workforce.

\$500,000 GRANT ESTABLISHES INTERDISCIPLINARY BIOPHARMACEUTICAL TECHNOLOGY MASTER'S DEGREE

Western New England University (WNE) has received a \$500,000 grant from the Healey-Driscoll Administration to establish a new interdisciplinary Master's in Biopharmaceutical Technology program. This funding is part of a \$13.1 million award from the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center (MLSC) aimed at advancing life sciences education across the state.

The new program integrates WNE's expertise in pharmaceutical sciences and engineering, offering students a comprehensive education in biopharmaceuticals. Focusing on advanced therapeutic medicinal products (ATMPs), such as gene and cell therapies, this program aligns with federal initiatives to enhance biotech and biomanufacturing capabilities.

The degree will help address critical health areas like cancer and neurodegenerative diseases, enhancing students' potential to transform patient care. The program targets students with a background in sciences, engineering, mathematics, or pharmacy.

The MLSC grant will support over 5,000 students statewide by expanding life sciences education and training programs, helping to meet the growing demand for skilled professionals in biotechnology and biopharmaceuticals.

PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY CAMPAIGN EDUCATES AND INFORMS

"Voting is one of the most fundamental rights in a democracy. It is not just a privilege, but a powerful tool for shaping the future of our communities and our country," said Julie E. Steiner, professor of law and director of the Institute for Legislative and Government Affairs (ILGA).

In a presidential election year, Western New England University's (WNE) School of Law proactively supported its students and the community through its "Participatory Democracy" campaign, which focused on education around citizenship, voting rights, and civic engagement.

The programming featured events and workshops designed to inform voters of their rights and equip them with resources needed to navigate the electoral process.

The campaign kicked off on September 16 with a naturalization ceremony in the Moot Court, where 48 new U.S. citizens from 27 countries took the Oath of Allegiance. Following this event, the School of Law's Student Bar Association assisted the new citizens with voter registration.

During the "Know Your Voting Rights" session, Steiner stressed the importance of self-advocacy at polling stations, clarifying that Massachusetts residents can vote regardless of language barriers, disabilities, or past criminal records.

The ILGA has collaborated with local grassroots organizations to provide practical support, including canvassing low-turnout neighborhoods, and disseminating information on voting procedures.

\$400,000 NSF GRANT SUPPORTS FACULTY RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Western New England University (WNE) has received a \$400,000 grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) under the Enabling Partnerships to Increase Innovation Capacity (EPIIC) program. This funding will help WNE build capacity and institutional knowledge to create new partnerships, secure future external funding, and engage with the regional innovation ecosystem. The NSF's announcement is part of an \$18.6 million investment awarded to 48 institutions.

Associate Provost Josephine Rodriguez serves as the principal investigator (PI) for the grant, with co-PIs Dr. Mahyar Pourghasemi and Dr. Glenn Vallee from the College of Engineering. Dr. Tamara Shattuck from the Education Department will act as the external evaluator for a cohort of five participating institutions.

The grant will allow WNE to establish a small-scale Office of Sponsored Projects to provide grant support for faculty and researchers. This initiative aims to enhance WNE's research profile among industry professionals and regional research centers.

The NSF EPIIC program, as part of the Directorate for Technology, Innovation, and Partnerships, aims to foster innovation ecosystems and promote partnerships to enhance U.S. competitiveness. WNE will collaborate with institutions like the University of Detroit Mercy and the Milwaukee School of Engineering.

The three-year grant will help sustain the University's growth in grant proposals while expanding external partnerships.

A NEW AGE OF CAREER READINESS

Briana K. Strobel '17/G'23

Making a significant impact on the Golden Bears of today and tomorrow, the WNE community celebrates the generosity of Kevin S. '77/H'19 and Sandra E. Delbridge.

For years, Kevin S. '77/H'19 and Sandra E. Delbridge have shown their affinity for Western New England University (WNE) and its students through countless generous contributions. From their endowed scholarships and the Welcome Center to their continued support of the student experience through various initiatives, the Delbridges have not shied away from paying it forward.

Now, thanks again to their generosity and desire to see WNE students succeed, the campus community celebrated the grand opening of the new Kevin S. and Sandra E. Delbridge Career Center earlier this fall. Facing the heart of campus, the new career center will act as a beacon for students looking to find their way in today's ever-changing job market.

With a wide representation of the Golden Bear community in attendance to celebrate the newest part of campus, President Johnson offered his words of appreciation and excitement around what this new, cutting-edge space offers current students, stating that, "this center is not just a place to polish resumes or practice interview skills, it's a space designed to help students become global citizens from the moment they set foot on campus to the very moment they graduate and beyond."

With the goal of aiding current students in their journey of becoming future-ready, the career center is outfitted with interview rooms, board rooms, and a lecture space, all mimicking a modern corporate office. The addition of such a space will be instrumental in fostering collaborations with local professionals, corporations, as well as WNE's strong alumni network. It will act as an additional resource for professional development, where students can gain skills, insights, and connections that will serve them throughout their professional careers.

The University is excited to have a physical space that embodies its commitment to providing students with the resources necessary to navigate and thrive post-college. Having the ability to not only foster career development, but also nurture current student's self-discovery and potential has always been at the forefront of what the Career Center strives to offer.

Whether you are an undergraduate, graduate student, recent grad, or seasoned alumnus looking to make a change in your career, the Kevin S. and Sandra E. Delbridge Career Center is here, and ready to support you in your journey.

Learn more at careercenter.wne.edu. 🐾





Golden Bear Alumni Spotlight

Danielle Delivers

Briana K. Strobel '17/G'23

Danielle Langevin '04/G'08 has been delivering more than just new listings to those in the market to buy or sell a house for the last 10 years – she's been delivering a promise to go above and beyond for her clients.

From a decade-long career in higher education admissions to a successful career in real estate, Langevin has utilized her network, resources, and love for helping others to make a name for herself. Now a licensed real estate agent with Lock & Key Realty - an alumni-owned boutique brokerage firm located in West Springfield, Mass. - she'd be the first to tell you that she never imagined she would be selling homes for a living.

How It All Started

A lifelong resident of western Massachusetts, Langevin found herself at Western New England University (WNE) for her undergraduate studies. After joining clubs, the dance team and getting involved on campus, WNE quickly became her home away from home. However, following graduation, she found herself unsure of what she was going to do, but with the help and encouragement of Dean Theodore Zern, she applied to become an admissions counselor at WNE.

Looking back now, she admits that it is one of the best jobs a recent graduate in their 20's could take – it allowed for travel, networking, and to gush with prospective students about the institution where she had just spent the last four years – it was the perfect situation.

Throughout her time in admissions, Langevin found herself working her way from counselor to senior assistant director of admissions. She explained that connecting with families and prospective students, while building relationships was one of her favorite parts, which is why it was difficult for her to eventually move on from her role in admissions as she started having children. "Once you start a family, it gets a little tricky," she added, "there was a lot of travel. I was spending a lot of time away from home. I did my last travel season pregnant and my last college fair just 11 days before the birth of my daughter."

It was then that she realized she was going to have to make a change – she said goodbye to WNE and began wondering how she was going to support her growing family.



The Power of Connection

Following her daughter's birth, Langevin searched for a career that would provide her with flexibility. After talking with her brother about what direction she should take her career in, he mentioned Marc Murphy '08, and all the work that he was doing within the housing industry.

Taking the suggestion, she called Murphy, who she hadn't seen in several years, and set up a meeting. She brought her then four-month-old daughter to the meeting and it was there that her story's trajectory changed. She started as an employee helping with data processing, learning the backside of the real estate industry, and began studying for her real estate licensure while working with renters.

Family First

Making the decision to jump into real estate all those years ago, Langevin was thinking of only one thing – her family. Now with three children, she has the power to make her own schedule, ensuring she's there for her kids before and after school, while still delivering high-quality customer service to her clients.

Family is at the heart of what drives her to be a better mom, wife, and real estate agent. Having started her career within the rental industry and later pivoting to single and multi-family homes, she claims her greatest joy is helping a family find their forever home. From the first meeting and educating her clients, to the search and eventual exchanging of keys on closing day, Langevin lives for the moments when they take those first pictures at their new home shedding tears of joy and relief.

This devotion to her clients and witnessing the process from start to end, is comparable to her first role as an admissions counselor – interacting with students at college fairs, giving tours, and meeting the families; she was selling WNE, educating each student on what they would receive by becoming a Golden Bear, then played witness when those students arrived and succeeded. “When you're working with a student, and you meet them at their high school, and then they apply, you get to see them get accepted,” she continued, “and then they come for their visit, accepted students' day, and they choose WNE...what I'm doing now - it's the same thing, only now I'm following the buyer through the house buying process.”

Educating for Future Success

One of the most important elements of Langevin's career is education – both for her, but also for her clients. Educating her clients so they're prepared to enter the market is her number one goal. After having a bad first-time home buyer experience herself, she takes pride in knowing that none of her clients will ever be unprepared.

While she values her continued growth, she also values her clients. To ensure that none of her clients have a negative experience, she likes to share best practices upon the initial meeting. From shopping around for a lender, to keeping an open mind, she has established strong relationships with those she serves, as well as local lawyers, mortgage lenders, and inspectors so that her clients are always equipped for what's next.

Langevin attributes her ability to stay up to date on the market and related issues to Lock & Key's commitment to excellence. She highlighted the pride the owners, Marc Murphy '08, and Jordan Healy '08, have for each of their employees.

Taking a hands-on approach to the ever-changing market, the boutique brokerage firm arms their employees by providing monthly education seminars and trainings on timely topics, such as solar energy, new lending programs, and most recently the new realtor compensation law. Recognizing that not every firm is going to approach their employees with this level of care, Langevin explained that “[Lock & Key] wants their agents to succeed. Their goal is to have us all grow and succeed together.”

Since reconnecting with Murphy and Healy and deciding to put her family first, Langevin has been a part of some remarkable growth – from the establishment of Lock & Key to the development of her own real estate brand “Danielle Delivers”, and of course the expansion of her family. When she started this adventure, she had just welcomed her first daughter; now ten years in, she has three beautiful children who make what she does every day for other families worth it. 🐾

Unlocking the Market: Expert Tips from Lock & Key Realty



How can prospective home buyers/sellers prepare themselves for the real estate process?

As much as Zillow (and similar sites) are everywhere, they are quite helpful and provide a realistic estimate for people in the market. So, if you're thinking about buying or selling keep an eye on the market so you have some background knowledge, and when it's time to talk to a realtor, you'll be prepared.

What advice do you give to first-time home buyers?

Find a reputable and trusted lender, that's step one. You shouldn't look at a house until you have your pre-approval letter. Too often in this market, it is about who you know. A trusted lender and a hardworking agent can be the reason you successfully close a deal. Once you have that, start to educate yourself on interest rates, monthly payments, down payments, etc. Coming prepared with that information could be what sets you apart from others that are also in the market to buy.

On the flip side, for those looking to sell their house – what advice would you recommend?

Once you have a realtor, get the initial paperwork done. After completing this step, you need to think that less is more – your home might not be everyone's style so the more you can declutter and remove personal effects, the more likely a potential buyer can picture themselves in that space. Additionally, you don't want to go crazy with home renovations, there's no guarantee that you can recoup that money. Rather, keep up with the general maintenance, collect any bills (heating, water, etc.), as well as any invoices that may be helpful.

What should we expect to see as the Baby Boomer generation begins selling?

You should expect to see more houses coming onto the market – that's great news for buyers. We're seeing more options, but also houses are sitting a little longer because there are more to choose from in comparison to how it was just a few years ago.

Have more questions? Contact Danielle Langevin at 413-364-3107 or danielle.a.langevin@gmail.com.



Dr. Dan Kennedy: Precision, Passion, and Pioneering Research

Sarah Leete Tsitso

With an eye for detail and a passion for education, Dr. Dan Kennedy has been pioneering the way for researchers (and students) to think about how they can make a difference.

Dr. Daniel R. Kennedy is meticulous, in all the best ways. In his office, magazines are stacked neatly, in evenly matched piles. No stray papers clutter his desk. Pens are lined up, standing at attention in a precise row. It appears nothing escapes Kennedy's piercing gaze.

That attention to detail serves him well as a researcher, an instructor, and chair of the Department of Pharmaceutical and Administrative Sciences at Western New England University (WNE).

Kennedy - who completed his master's degree at Emory University, his PhD at the State University of New York at Buffalo, and his post-doctoral fellowship at Harvard Medical School - is a founding faculty member within the University's College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. He has taught more than 14 different courses within the College since the program's inception. Now, he typically teaches a couple of courses per semester in pathophysiology and pharmacology.

Ever the teacher, Kennedy ensures to explain the terminology of pathophysiology.

"Physiology is the function of the body - how

it works," he explains. "Pathophysiology is when something in the body is not working right. Physiology will talk about blood pressure and how blood pressure is controlled. Pathophysiology talks about why someone would have high blood pressure."

He has kept a focus on research throughout his career and at the moment, is working on a project that, if successful, will help people live longer, healthier lives. It involves zafirlukast, a drug that has already received FDA-approval and has been used for years to treat asthma. Through their research, Kennedy and his team have found this drug also works for cancer and thrombotic disease - blood clots that can lead to heart attacks, strokes, and pulmonary embolisms.

"It's been pretty cool," said Kennedy. "We discovered this drug, which was already out there in the market, that had these possibilities to do other things. We applied for, and were awarded, a grant from the National Cancer Institute, which allowed us to do preclinical work in collaboration with Dr. Jeffrey Zwicker, a clinician at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, as a clinical trial in cancer

patients. It worked out well and now we are looking to take it further, so we have another grant application to the National Cancer Institute with Baystate Health to see if we can start a new clinical trial here. We are hopeful that it gets funded."

Doing this kind of high-level research is a team effort. Kennedy points out he is only one part of that team. He also works hard to make sure his students can participate in the process, learning invaluable lessons along the way.

For instance, Cameron Vrabel, a second-year student in the PharmD program, wanted to get involved in the work being done around zafirlukast and a similar drug, pranlukast.

"Cameron worked on this project for a few months, and we took him to the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy conference in Boston, where he won the poster competition for best research project," Kennedy stated. "People from all over the country were there, and Cameron pulled it off."

"Right now, WNE is two-for-two at that conference," Kennedy added. "Last time, in

2019, another student from our group, Dr. Christina Verbetsky '19/PharmD'21 won that same award. Our students are doing really well - they are able to experience some amazing opportunities. They really thrive when they go up against other students and colleges in these types of competitions."

Vrabel isn't the only student tackling innovative, groundbreaking work under Kennedy's leadership. He has mentored or co-mentored over 60 students in research projects since he started at WNE, most of which have presented a poster or even published a paper. However, Kennedy is careful to note that students must take the initiative and be self-motivated to see it through.

"One of the main criteria we look for when it comes to students participating in this kind of research is interest and dedication," said Kennedy. "Doing the research isn't for everybody."

But Kennedy highlighted that Vrabel is a great example of how this partnership between faculty and students can work well when it comes to research.

"This is a project that is important to him," Kennedy emphasized. "It's not my main thing, but I'll put into it what they put into it. The students must take ownership of the project because I'm not going to be following up with them every week. If you want it done, put the effort in and I'll make sure you have everything you need to be successful."

For the first five years of the University's pharmacy program, Kennedy published papers or other research projects with about 10 percent of each graduating class. But keeping up that pace proved difficult as his own research became more intense and more focused. Not to mention the demands of his time when he was promoted to the chair position within the department.

That being said, Kennedy is quick to credit the 17 other faculty members of the Department of Pharmaceutical and Administrative Sciences who find ways to get students involved, helping them make their own impact on the world. That impact is a big reason Kennedy has chosen to dedicate his own life to research and further others through education.

"The part to me that was always interesting is the 'so what' question," Kennedy began. "My drug does this...' Ok, big deal. So what? How can it make people's lives better?"

Kennedy's PhD was focused on the mechanisms of what potential drugs could do. He did this work throughout his PhD, as well as his post-doctoral fellowship, in a hospital which he said is uncommon for his field.

"You would go in there every day, walk through the hospital to get to your research lab and think about the patients," he explained. "That's why you're there, right? It was a reminder of why you were there and what you were trying to accomplish."

This brings Kennedy back to zafirlukast, and its potential for new and important uses other than asthma treatment.

"I really like the idea of drug repurposing," he said. "We are able to move things along much faster when we already know they are safe, and that they are FDA-approved. They've been out there for a long time, but they have a big effect."

Zafirlukast is one of those drugs. Kennedy mentioned their work in this area attracted the interest of a Swiss pharmaceutical company, which licensed the patents the University held and awarded the institution a grant to continue its research with the promising drug.

"This company is doing clinical trials as well in a similar area," he began. "We are hoping it all comes together nicely and results in a medication that makes a difference, because some of the results have been really exciting in the area of cancer and thrombosis."

Kennedy shared that their latest paper showed that the drug reduced metastasis in mice, which is one of the major ways people succumb to cancer. And the second reason people die of cancer, Kennedy noted, is cancer-induced thrombosis.

"You are more likely to have a blood clot if you have cancer than if you don't," he shared. "And in fact, you're even more likely to have a blood clot if you're on certain cancer treatments, than if you don't. We are hoping to add our drug, which is FDA-approved, to general cancer regimens to prevent blood clotting in patients. It has some anti-cancer effects, which never hurts, but it also seems to prevent some of the side effects which is uncommon in some of the approaches we're taking."

Like many science fields, the pharmaceutical world is always evolving. Part of that is reflected by how incoming students are approaching the program.

To accommodate and embrace these changes, the University recently started a distance learning program where students from around the U.S. can take courses within the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences.

"We have a great variety of opportunities for students to do all sorts of things," stated Kennedy. "One of the other parts that has been really great is the alumni we have who have been so successful as they get out into the world. We started a Pharmacy Advisory Board which includes alumni doing really great things. We started a Young Distinguished Alumni award a few years ago and we've brought those graduates back. The things they've been able to accomplish and the leadership positions they've had has been great to see."

The college has been adding new majors and programs, while also providing a new home for some existing majors. For instance, neuroscience - a major that has been in place at the University for many years - officially joined the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences three years ago. Kennedy mentioned that program has been growing and offers an interesting dual BS/MS degree programs for its students.

"We also just started a Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Management degree, which is more the business side of the pharmaceutical industry. That program was covered in the College of Business but was moved over here."

"We have expanded the opportunities we offer to our students, and I think research-wise, it's really starting to take off. We have some exciting grants out there that hopefully the National Institutes of Health (NIH) will fund and if they do, I really think it will lead us to exciting opportunities."

Kennedy emphasized his excitement to see the growth within the College and their department. "We have started three master's programs in the past three years, a thesis-based M.S. in Pharmaceutical Sciences, a laboratory and clinical based M.S. in Pharmacogenomics and an academic based M.S. in Medical Sciences." He went on to include, they were also recently awarded a grant from the State of Massachusetts to start a fourth M.S. degree in Pharmaceutical Engineering, which they are planning to launch in the fall of 2025. 🐾



Golden Bear Athletics Recap: Honoring a Season of Excellence

WNE Men's Wrestling Celebrates 50 Years

The Western New England University (WNE) men's wrestling program proudly celebrates its 50th anniversary during the 2024-2025 season, marking an extraordinary milestone in the program's rich and storied history. Established as a club team during the 1974-1975 academic year under the leadership of then head coach, Bob Skelton, the program officially transitioned to varsity status in the 1976-1977 season. Skelton, who is now a WNE Downes Athletic Hall of Famer, coached the team for more than 26 years and remains the winningest coach in the program's history. During the late 1980's into the 1990's, the Golden Bear men's wrestling program saw multiple athletes earn top placements in the prestigious National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) Division III Championship, including future Olympic medalist Rodney Smith '89/G'03, Jesse Morrison '96, and Bill Simpson '96, all of whom earned top-five finishes in their respective weight classes at the event.

The program's momentum continued to build in 2012-2013 when the Golden Bears competed in the NCAA Division III Northeast Regional

tournament for the first time, marking a new era of excellence. Since that pivotal season, the team has produced numerous wrestlers who have earned National Wrestling Coaches Association (NWCA) All-American honors. The program has flourished under the leadership of Head Coach and Director of Wrestling, Mike Sugermeyer G'17, who has been at the helm since the 2015-2016 season. One of its most historic achievements occurred during the 2018-2019 season when John Boyle '20 captured the 184-pound national title, becoming Western New England's first-ever NCAA National Champion.

To commemorate this year's 50th anniversary, the program hosted a weekend of celebratory events during Golden Bear Weekend, that brought together more than 150 alumni, family members, and friends, representing five decades of WNE wrestling history. Looking to honor the program's legacy and the people who helped shape it, the festivities included the induction of Bryan Brunk '98 into the Downes Athletics Hall of Fame, an intrasquad scrimmage held in the newly renovated wrestling room - which was officiated by BIG 10 wrestling official, and

WNE alumnus, Angel Rivera '94 - as well as a 50th anniversary banquet.

The 50th anniversary banquet, held at The Sheraton in downtown Springfield, drew over 100 attendees from the WNE wrestling community. The dinner featured inspiring speeches from notable alumni wrestling figures spanning multiple generations. The Monteiro family, who have had members on the University's wrestling roster for nearly 35% of the program's history, were also recognized for their lasting contributions.

"When you make the decision to wrestle at WNE, it is for more than just four years; you become a part of our wrestling family for the rest of your life," began Sugermeyer. "Our 50 year celebration was a great testament to that, as we welcomed over five decades of wrestling alumni and more than 150 members of our wrestling family back to campus. The program's legacy is a source of pride for everyone involved, and we look forward to building on this solid foundation in the years to come."





Derek Johnson Headlines the Men's Golf Fall Season

The Western New England men's golf team competed in five events this past fall, improving three spots in their conference championship event thanks to newcomer, Derek Johnson. Johnson began his WNE men's golf career at the Duke Nelson Invitational, impressing many eyes at the event. He finished second out of 120 golfers and led the Golden Bears to a fourth-place overall finish out of 22 teams. Johnson played scratch golf for the 36-hole event, finishing +1 on opening day of the tournament while completing his second round at -1, finishing even par. Johnson carried that success into the Bowdoin College Invitational where the Mountain Top, Pa. native finished 18th overall in a competitive 109 golfer event.

The first-year student would continue his successes on the course at both the Skidmore Invitational and the New England Intercollegiate Golf Association's (NEGIA) championship event, helping lead WNE to a 15th place finish at Skidmore and 8th place finish at the NEGIA event. Johnson found his swing during the most important event of the fall - the Conference of New England (CNE) Championships - where he helped the Golden Bears place third overall, shooting a 150. As a first-year, Johnson ranks regionally within the top 15 male golfers for the season.

Women's Volleyball Matches Largest Win Total in Ten Years

The Western New England women's volleyball team picked up 21 total wins during their 2024 fall campaign, matching their highest win total in over ten years. With a predominately heavy road schedule, the Golden Bears were victorious in 10 of the 15 away matches this season. WNE was led this season by senior Alissa Hawes, who recorded over 400 kills in-season, becoming just the fourth Golden Bear of all-time to reach such a feat, and the first since 2009. Hawes will also go into the women's volleyball single season record books in multiple categories, including kills per set, attack attempts, points, and points per set. Hawes' remarkable career will also be reflected in the record books for total kills, kills per set, total attacks, digs, digs per set, total points, points per set, and block assists. In the final match of her career, the Tupelo, Miss. native reached 1,000 career kills and 1,000 career digs in the same game, further solidifying her leadership of the Golden Bears. Hawes will be joined in the record books by fellow senior and teammate, Taylor Geist, who put together 2,000 career assists this season, being one of just three in WNE women's volleyball history to accomplish this milestone. Geist's assists per set numbers this season will also rank in the top five of all-time within a single season in the program's history. As a team, the Golden Bears advanced to the Conference of New England (CNE) tournament and made it to the semifinal round for the fourth straight season.

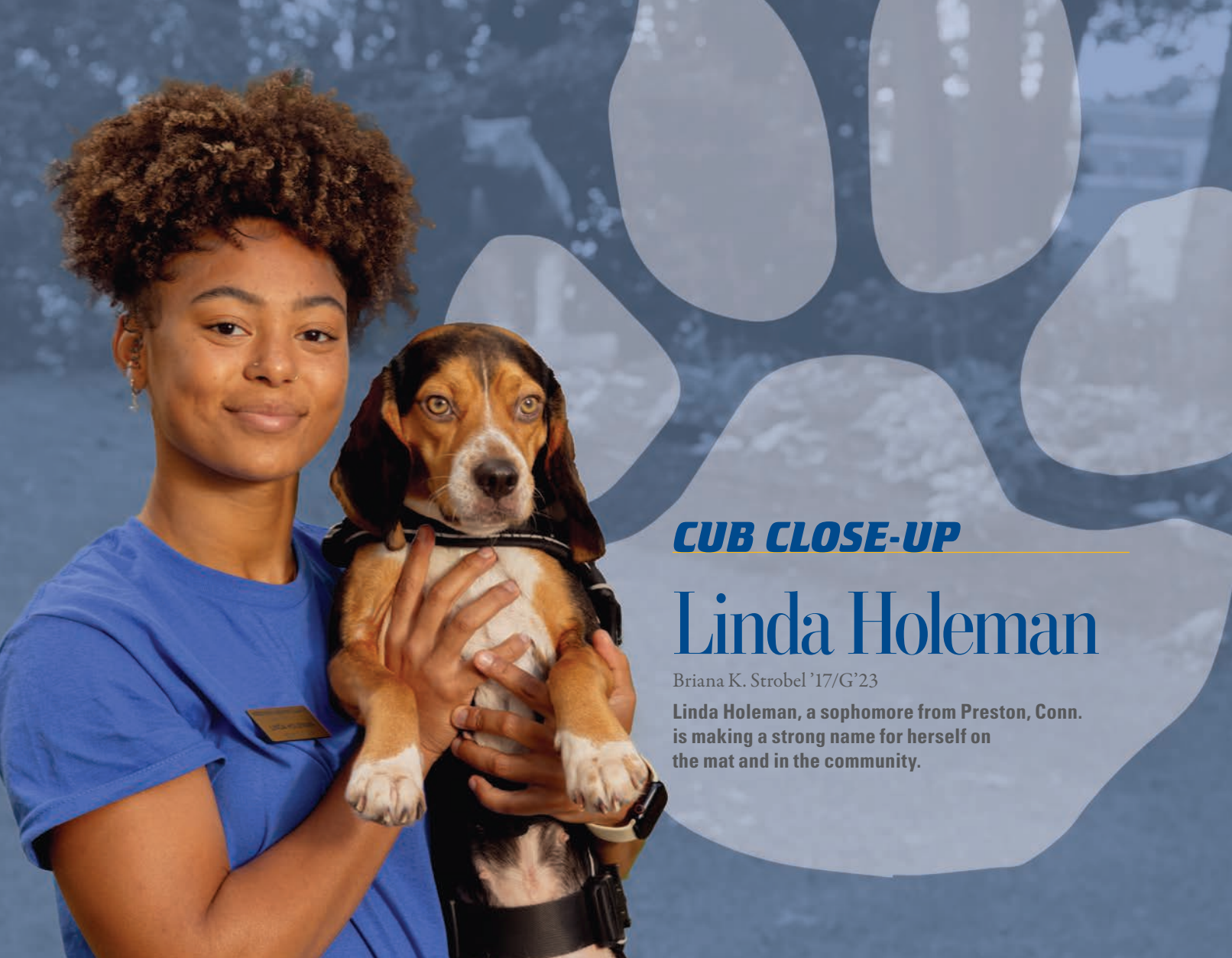


Men's Cross Country's Matt Provost Breaks 8K Race Program Record

Western New England men's cross country standout, Matt Provost, made history twice this season breaking a program record that had stood for over 20 years, and cementing himself as the fastest runner in Western New England men's cross country history on an 8K course. Provost first achieved this remarkable feat during the Western New England Invitational on October 19, as part of the Golden Bear Weekend festivities. Running on his home course, Provost completed the 8K event in an impressive 26 minutes and 45 seconds, shaving six seconds off the previous record, which was set back in 2002. And then again, a few weeks later during his final race on the cross country team, Provost broke his own historic record, running a 26.31, 14 seconds faster than his previous record this season.

His record-breaking performances underscore his stellar season and solidifies his place among the program's elite runners. Following the Conference of New England (CNE) Championships, which also took place on his home course, the Monson, Mass. native now holds seven of the top 25 fastest 8K times in the program's history. Adding to his accolades, Provost has claimed the top spot for the fastest time in the men's 5K race, further highlighting his versatility and dominance on the course.





CUB CLOSE-UP

Linda Holeman

Briana K. Strobel '17/G'23

Linda Holeman, a sophomore from Preston, Conn. is making a strong name for herself on the mat and in the community.

Tell us a little bit about yourself...

Hi there, my name is Linda Holeman, I am a sophomore from Preston, Conn., and I am pursuing a bachelor's degree in criminal justice, and a minor in victimology with the goal of becoming a police officer and victim advocate. I have three younger siblings; one biological sister, and two adopted siblings who officially became a part of our family last December.

I have loved becoming involved within the Western New England University (WNE) campus, which includes being a member of the women's wrestling team as well as a resident advisor (RA). I am also part of the student cadet program, black student athlete association (BSAA), student-athlete advisory committee (SAAC), captains' council, the athletic representative for student senate, and a member of the criminal justice association, all of which

have provided me with opportunities to connect with fellow students and members beyond our community.

Can you talk about what it means to you to be a member of the women's wrestling team, and why you looked to continue wrestling in college?

When I applied, COVID was still prevalent so there was a big debate on whether or not I would continue wrestling - and even more of that depended on where I applied. In the end, it came down to the school (and team) that I thought was going to push me the most, and that saw my potential. I applied to a lot of schools, but Coach Sugermeyer was the only coach who reached out to me, saw my potential, and took the time to get to know me. After taking a tour and meeting with him in person, I knew I was going to come to WNE.

The women's wrestling program is now under the leadership of Coach Keane, and he has continued to support me and my teammates. He's been such an amazing coach - he pushes each of us to reach our weight goals, our training goals, and encourages us to unleash when we're on the mat. The amount of belief that Coach Keane and Coach Sugermeyer have in us is inspiring, and definitely drives me to want to become a better wrestler, to compete harder, and put WNE women's wrestling on the map.

Celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, the WNE wrestling program and its alumni, have taken the women's team under their wings by showing up for us just as much as they have for the men. It has been a great experience, having them welcome us like that, coming to matches, and cheering

us on. They have treated us the exact same way as our male counterparts, and I'm excited to continue watching our program grow – we'll even have our first women's program alumni after this year!

Overall being a part of this team and the WNE wrestling community has been amazing. The coaches, alumni, and fellow student-athletes have all cultivated a culture that is welcoming and driven for success. Having my coaches' support has instilled a level of confidence in myself I didn't have before. I'm naturally a very shy person that suffers from some anxiety, so coming out of my shell hasn't always been easy. Thankfully, I had a friend on the team that helped me open up and feel more comfortable. Now as a sophomore, I'm looking forward to helping our incoming first-year students feel welcomed and get acclimated to collegiate wrestling.

Why was it important for you to get involved in so many areas of campus?

Honestly, a lot of what I'm involved in is helping me build relationships - here on campus and within the broader community, to which I hope to build connections that will help me after college. The student cadet program, for example, is helping me enhance my resume for when I want to become a police officer. This position alone has provided me the skills and ability to talk to our campus community, get training from our campus officers, and be a member of a team.

Now in your sophomore year, what are you looking forward to the most?

I entered college wanting to be a police officer, wanting to help and protect people. It wasn't until I arrived here that I realized I wanted to do even more. It's for that reason that I added the minor of victimology –

and now I'm even considering adding a psychology minor to my degree. I'm excited to be able to find classes and peers that are interested in the same things as me. Having the tools necessary to advocate for people, be a resource and role model for others, is something I'm looking forward to this year in the classroom, on the mat, and within the community.

As for wrestling, I am proud of what I was able to accomplish as a first-year student – being able to attend the National Collegiate Women's Wrestling Championships (NCWWC) in Cedar Rapids, IA, last year, and compete against the best in the country was a surreal experience. This year, I not only want to improve my pins record and drop a weight class, but I also want to get back to Nationals, finish in the top five, and become an All-American. With Coach Keane's help, I'm confident that I'll be able to achieve these goals and continue representing WNE women's wrestling on a national stage.

Throughout the last year I have had the opportunity to meet younger female wrestlers that are coming to matches because they look up to me or see our program and its success. That alone has been very motivational. I'm excited to continue contributing to our program's impact, by inspiring others to pursue female wrestling while challenging the stereotypes around strength and confidence, both in competition and within the community.

What would you share with alumni and future Golden Bears about WNE?

WNE is a very welcoming community. Everyone here encourages students to get involved, try new things, and meet new people. They've recently opened the Student Hub, which aims to help students

become acquainted with available resources and make the campus more accessible for everyone.

The University is also providing more opportunities for student-athletes – starting athletic programs like women's wrestling, women's ice hockey, and track and field. A lot of colleges don't value the student-athletes the same way WNE does, and while academics come first, I have found a community here. One where I can be a beast on the mat, but also a student rep on class-council or wear a uniform and patrol campus with the cadet program. Western New England certainly provides their students with a well-rounded experience. 🐻





GOLDEN BEAR WEEKEND BROUGHT RECORD HIGH SPIRIT

Briana K. Strobel '17/G'23

This year, Western New England University (WNE) combined Undergraduate Open House, Family & Friends Weekend, and Homecoming to create a weekend that brought the entire Golden Bear community together.

Welcoming Golden Bears from near and far, along with prospective students and their families, was a vibrant campus radiating with orange and yellow hues of a typical New England autumn. The annual Downes Athletic Hall of Fame awards kicked off the weekend's festivities with former Golden Bear alumni athletes, Jacquelyn (Bailey) Thornton '03 (women's soccer), Bryan Brunk '98 (men's wrestling), Marissa (Bonitabus) Kukis '11 (women's lacrosse), alongside Michael Theulen, former director of athletics and men's basketball coach, honored as the Class of 2024 inductees.

Golden Bear Boulevard was the place to be on Saturday, October 19 as each of the University's undergraduate Colleges were represented in full blue and gold fashion. Lining the Pine Grove, tents with faculty and staff, student activities, and WNE alumni-owned small businesses were eager to reconnect and mingle with those in attendance. Alongside the University tents, kids and families were seen enjoying various food trucks and activities in the KidZone. For the first time this year, spectators of the WNE football game were able to watch from the Golden Bear Tent, sipping on beverages from local alumni-owned breweries, Fieldcrest and Loophole Brewing. However, the fun didn't end just because the football game did – those in attendance gathered for Bear Bash on Commonwealth Lawn, a concert where families and fellow Golden Bears enjoyed the music stylings of the Corey Riegan & The Dilemma Band, while indulging in some local brews and snacks.

Golden Bear athletics hit their stride that Saturday, as each of the home teams found successful results. WNE football took home the win over the Curry Colonels with a 47-21 victory, while women's volleyball and field hockey battled it out with conference rivals from the University of New England (UNE), both winning 3-1. The cross country teams hosted their Fall Invitational, where they finished 4th/17 (men's) and 9th/14 (women's). Graduate student, Matt Provost, also recorded the fastest 8K in program history.

The weekend featured several reunion events, including an off campus gathering to celebrate the 30th reunion for the class of 1994. Throughout the day, alumni athletic reunions took place reconnecting and reminding alumni what it means to be a part of the WNE Golden Bear athletic family. Women's basketball welcomed back alumni for their annual alumni game, both cross country teams witnessed alumni run during their Fall Invitational, while WNE wrestling celebrated their 50th anniversary with an intrasquad meet, brunch, and later in the evening, a dinner.

Wrapping up the weekend, President Robert Johnson, and other members of leadership on campus, welcomed family and friends for Pancakes with the President on Sunday morning before heading home. Relive, experience, and enjoy a look back at Golden Bear Weekend 2024 at alumni.wne.edu/goldenbearweekend24. 🐻







WNE Engineering Alumni

Kevin Sliech Brings Architecture to Technology

Kevin Sliech '06 is inventing solutions at Apple and crafting cutting-edge displays for everyday use.

Sarah Leete Tsitso

Kevin Sliech '06 is not technically an architect, at least not in the traditional sense, but he does create and build innovative designs in a way that mimics the intricacy and art of architecture. That's probably why his official title at Apple is Senior Display Features and Technology Architect and Engineering Manager. It's also probably why he uses an architecture analogy to explain what exactly his title means.

"When you think about what an architect does, it's very different from the work done by the person who comes in later to actually build the house," said Sliech. He described an architect as the one that figures out where the wires and plumbing go, and how many bathrooms the house should have, compared to someone that comes in and builds it. He expanded upon that thought by stating "if you've done a lousy job designing the house, it's going to have all kinds of problems. It's the same thing here, just on an electronic level."

Working in the display engineering group, much of the product is electrical in nature, particularly the display components. To be successful, the designer (or architect) needs

to have a keen understanding of both the hardware and software sides of the equation, starting from the conceptual phase. "We're not just making hardware in a vacuum," he said. "A lot of the stuff I work on crosses the boundaries between hardware, software, and firmware. That's kind of what I specialize in."

A 2006 graduate of Western New England University's (WNE) College of Engineering, Sliech credits the unique skills he honed as an electrical engineering major with helping him master the complex and ever-changing world of advanced technology.

"I've always been very interested in both the hardware and the software which started with my senior undergraduate project," he stated. "At WNE, I designed antennas, but I also designed the computer-controlled part of those antennas where there was a software interface to it. I always loved doing the whole stack. It was always a very cool thing for me, and I was able to keep doing it (in my career)."

Utilizing the strengths of multiple disciplines, he emphasizes the importance of pushing the boundaries, "It's in this space, you have

full control of the hardware, software and firmware, and you can co-design everything together," he noted. Sliech carried that mindset with him to Apple, where he just celebrated his 10th anniversary with the Fortune 500 company.

"You have to deeply understand how all that stuff works, especially with displays, the electrical aspect of it directly affects what you see," he said. "Because we're lighting up this display, you're going to notice if it looks good and if it works properly. There's a ton of electrical engineering aspects involved; whether it's making the custom chips, or defining the solutions on the circuit boards, or how we interface with the rest of the system." He admits that earlier in his career at Apple, he was heavily involved in those aspects, however, now finds himself splitting efforts between electrical engineering, software, and digital design.

One of his favorite parts of the job involves working directly with customers, understanding their needs and the problems to be solved.

"I really love learning about the customer - what they do, what they need - and figuring out where the pain points are, and then inventing solutions to solve those problems." Sliech continued, "We start out knowing the customer has a certain issue, and then we architect a solution for it, leading it through the design and getting it out the door."

There's that word again - architect.

In addition to building ideas, fostering collaborations, and creating solutions, Sliech also nurtures relationships at WNE through his ongoing commitment to volunteering and generous contributions.

Once a year, Sliech travels back to WNE from his home in San Francisco, Calif. to speak to electrical engineering students about his experiences. He is also a member of the Industrial Advisory Board for the Electrical Engineering Department at the University. Giving back to the College of Engineering has always been at the forefront of his mind. Having the ability to come back to the College that gave him the tools necessary to be successful, and help current students prepare for what's beyond the classroom brings him joy.

One of the ways that he continues to give back is through the Industrial Advisory Board, which brings professionals from the field to campus to offer real-world advice and feedback to help the department make decisions about the skills students are learning that would best prepare them for future careers.

"The idea is to help the professors understand what is going on in the industry and what people in the industry are looking for from graduates coming out of school," Sliech explained. "The professors ask us about proposed curriculum changes and what skills we wish graduates were bringing with them into the workforce."

"As a manager, I talk about what I am looking for in my domain. That helps them make decisions and chart where the Electrical Engineering Department is going next."

The Industry Advisory Board helps keep the professors plugged in to the industry, and ensure they stay abreast of what's relevant for these types of engineers. Sliech said this kind of collaboration is crucial to making sure students are poised to take on complex assignments and understand cutting-edge technology in the real world.

During his time at WNE, Sliech was part of the engineering honor society, also serving as president of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) group at one point.

"Through IEEE especially, is where I got comfortable reaching out to folks in the industry," he said. "I see a lot of students doing that now. I'll get emails or they'll reach out through LinkedIn. I like when the students reach out because I love offering what I hope are insights into the field."

There are a couple lessons Sliech tries to impart to the students seeking a job in his field. First, it's how quickly the industry

"The idea is to help the professors understand what is going on in the industry and what people in the industry are looking for from graduates coming out of school,"

moves, and how often the technology changes.

"Things move really fast," he said. "Concepts like machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI) were in their nascent phases when I started. I had no background in that stuff. So how do you keep students up on the newest trends?"

Sliech credits the professors and electrical engineering program at WNE for helping keep students ahead of the learning curve when it comes to technology.

"All the classes I took were relevant; I used all of them when I graduated. The professors are out there talking to industry folks and getting feedback." He explained that when he got out of school, he tried to follow their example by hitting the ground running using the skills he had learned. Because of classes like field programmable gate array (FPGA) design (a course dedicated to a type of configurable integrated circuit that can be repeatedly programmed after manufacturing) and computer architecture courses, he had skills that he would be using immediately.

But those technical skills only take a person so far - Sliech noted that, when he hires, there

are other qualities that are equally important, such as "soft skills", like communication.

"It's valuable to find people who can explain highly technical concepts in a very simple way," he began. "You have to be able to speak everyone's language. When you are trying to sell a feature or report some problem, you must be able to bring it to leadership and explain extremely technical, complex concepts very succinctly, representing several different disciplines quickly, so they can make the right decision."

Sliech stresses the importance of effective communication with his team, but also prioritizes collaboration and teamwork.

The need for collaboration and understanding that crosses the boundary of expertise underscores another skill set Sliech believes will help WNE students who are seeking a career in electrical engineering.

"Even when I graduated, there were so many ways you could go as an electrical engineer," he began. "And they were all different. Today, what I would encourage students to do - is what I did - start learning cross-discipline skills, particularly in software. Pure hardware engineers are great, but the ones who can also do a reasonable amount of software... it ends up being a superpower. I've really used that to my advantage."

Sliech admits that upon entering the workforce, he did not branch out much into software. However, prior to joining Apple he started dabbling in writing apps to help with hardware projects, thus leading him to where he is today. "We need those real technical experts, but if you also learn how to write apps, or write advanced scripts, you can really supercharge your work," he stated.

In diversifying his areas of expertise, he opened a lot of pathways for himself, and advocates for others to do the same if they can. "Specialties are very good, but try some other things on the side to expand your reach."

Sliech then brings that word - architecture - back into the conversation. "Expertise is really important," he continued. "I'm not saying people should become generalists, but if all you have (is one skill), you're probably going to be a terrible architect. You need experience and perspective." This architect has seen it all before, having what he calls "the ideal mix". His skill combined with deep expertise has allowed him to expand his efforts broadly across other areas. 🐾



ALUMNI NEWS

For the latest alumni news from Western New England University, visit alumni.wne.edu/news.

JOIN THE PARENTS ADVANCEMENT COUNCIL TODAY AND MAKE AN IMPACT ON YOUR STUDENT'S EXPERIENCE

Be among the first members of Western New England's new Parents Advancement Council (PAC) and experience exclusive benefits while advancing the University's mission. The PAC's purpose is to bring together parents who hold a common philanthropic ideal and are committed to promoting the University's initiatives to achieve an elevated level of education and student experience. As a parent participant, you play an integral role in the growth and development of your student, and Western New England University. Together, we can make a meaningful difference for the Golden Bear community. For more information, please contact Kristina Oleksak, director of alumni engagement, at kristina.oleksak@wne.edu.

GOLDEN GRADUATES REUNITE: CHERISHING MEMORIES AND MILESTONES

The Western New England Alumni Association hosted the Golden Graduates Luncheon on Wednesday, June 26, to celebrate the significant milestone of 50+ years since graduation from Western New England University (WNE). Golden Graduates fondly reflected on their time at WNE, relived the memories of a now changed institution, and reconnected with friends sharing stories of prized past times.

The event brought together Golden Bears from 11 different class years, ranging from 1963 to 1974 – many of whom have not been back to their alma mater for over half a century. Although the campus landscape has evolved, alumni were

reassured that WNE has consistently maintained its commitment to fostering close, personal connections among students, faculty, and staff mentors—connections that many of them fondly recalled. This strong bond is what continually attracts students to the University and keeps them engaged throughout their time here. Shaina Cooney, a senior Health Sciences major with a minor in Chemistry, shared her experiences at WNE; highlighting the endless opportunities and preparation the University has provided to ensure she and fellow students have the best experience possible, both in and out of the classroom.



Show your love for
#WNEGIVES

CAN'T HELP FALLING IN LOVE WITH WNE(U) DURING #WNEGIVES

Save the date for #WNEGives, our annual day of giving, on Wednesday, February 12, 2025. Heat up the winter months by showing your love for Western New England and creating a lasting impact on the WNE community. Your gift of any amount will make a difference in the lives of current and future Golden Bears. We can't wait to fall in love with WNE(U) all over again this February!



PRESIDENT'S DONOR RECEPTION CELEBRATES ALUMNI PHILANTHROPY AND STUDENT SUCCESS

The warmth and enthusiasm of the esteemed guests illuminated the evening at the annual President's Donor Reception held on Wednesday, September 25, at GreatHorse Country Club. Over 100 alumni, families, friends, faculty, and staff were celebrated for their philanthropic contributions to Western New England University (WNE). The evening was kicked off by the Golden Voices choir with a vibrant and lively rendition of Bill Withers' "Lean on Me." President Robert Johnson followed the performance sharing his appreciation for the unwavering belief in the University's mission. He stressed that none of

it would be possible without the support of our dedicated community who always "lend a hand and a shoulder to lean on."

Nick LaPier '90, chair of the board of trustees, assisted President Johnson and Vice President for University Advancement, Dean Hickey with inducting the newest Benefactor's Society and Cupola Society members. The Benefactor's Award recipients included Sandra Zieminski and Carl Zieminski, Jr. in memory of the late Carl Zieminski, Sr. '66/G'70, for their substantial gift to the Zieminski Family Industrial Engineering Lab. Additionally, Alison and Stefan Sjoberg L'18/G'18,

were welcomed into the Cupola Society for their intent to leave the University in their estate plans.

Jaylen Hawkins, a senior civil engineering student, captain of the men's wrestling team, and recipient of the William and Iona Sleith Endowed Scholarship from Danbury, Conn., concluded the evening's remarks. He took the time to reflect upon his journey, crediting athletics and the extraordinary WNE experience for shaping him into the young man he is today. He expressed eagerness to fulfill his responsibility of making a difference in the world upon graduating in the spring.



WNE ATHLETICS HOSTS 25TH ANNUAL GOLF CLASSIC

The Western New England Athletics Department hosted its 25th Annual Golf Classic on September 30, at The Ranch Golf Club in Southwick, Mass. The event welcomed family, friends, alumni, and supporters of WNE Athletics for a day filled with companionship and competition. The day included lunch, an 18-hole round of golf, dinner, prizes, and raffles - making it an entertaining and memorable experience for all attendees.

The warm September afternoon saw over 104 golfers and 26 foursomes participate, helping to raise money in supporting the future of Golden Bear Athletics and enhancing the student-athlete experience. WNE Athletics extends its heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed to the success of the day - all the support plays a pivotal role in furthering the student-athlete experience. Those who could not attend this year are warmly invited to join in the festivities at the 26th Annual Golf Classic, on Monday, September 29, 2025, at The Ranch Golf Club.

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING HOSTS 23RD ANNUAL ALUMNI MENTORING PROGRAM

With over 40 alumni from across the country registered, the Western New England University (WNE) College of Engineering hosted the 23rd Annual Alumni Mentoring Program kickoff event on Thursday, October 10. This is the opening event in a series of mentoring discussions throughout the fall 2024 semester, with the intention of connecting first-year engineering students with former College of Engineering alumni professionals. The event is hosted on Zoom and is an academic requirement for all first-year engineering students.

This year, it provided 200 students exclusive access to engage with over 40 alumni from across New England and as far away as California, Florida, Michigan, Virginia, and Texas. Through breakout rooms and roundtable discussions, alumni engaged with driven students, sharing guidance, expertise, and advice to help them explore their interests, shape their academic paths, and strengthen their career aspirations. As per tradition, the Walter J. Azar Award was granted to a student who has completed two semesters of study and has demonstrated exceptional academic achievement in computer engineering courses. The 2024 honoree was Alexis Kempton, a sophomore Mechanical Engineering honor-student from Dracut, Mass.



Honoring the Leaders of Tomorrow at the Annual Skookum Awards Ceremony

On Sunday, October 6, the Office of Alumni Engagement held its annual Skookum Awards Ceremony, inducting 16 extraordinary students into the exclusive cohort of outstanding students.

The Skookum Award was first established in 1989 by the Western New England University Alumni Association to recognize the outstanding achievements of students for their academic commitment, unwavering leadership, and astounding representation of the vibrant, diverse student body. The Skookum Award Ceremony is a long-time tradition, drawing in the attendance of many past award recipients who look to show their support and usher this year's honorees into the Skookum network. D'Naysia Stonick '19, a Skookum alumna and the event's guest speaker, shared four pieces of advice with the soon to be graduating class - the importance of nurturing connections, obtaining the tools necessary to succeed, embracing change, and to always keep growing. Dr. Allissa Long '17/ PharmD '19, Ryan Hoover '23, and Alley Estrella '23 recognized the 16 students' amazing achievements presenting them with their framed certificate and symbolic rock alongside President Robert Johnson.

The top three candidates were awarded the highest honors of Grand Skookum and Royal Skookum:



Ashley Figueroa, 2024 Grand Skookum, is a Biomedical Engineering major with a minor in Chemistry from Charlton, Mass.



Elizabeth Heiney, 2024 Royal Skookum, is a Management and Leadership major with a minor in Finance from Springfield, Mass.



Armani Mayes, 2024 Royal Skookum, is a 3+3 Psychology and Doctor of Occupational Therapy student with a minor in Neuroscience from Waterbury, Conn.

The following 13 students received Skookum honors:



Alexa Adams, a Business Analytics and Information Management major with a minor in Finance and Enterprise Resource Planning from Windsor Locks, Conn.



Lauren Corcoran, a Biomedical Engineering major from Kingston, Mass.



Kaila Mank, a Marketing Communications/Advertising and Entrepreneurship double major from Raymond, Maine



Adriana Aponte, a Psychology major with an Accounting minor from Meriden, Conn.



Brianne Dube, a Health Studies major, and student in WNE's 3+3 Doctor of Occupational Therapy Program from Lewiston, Maine



Patrick Riley, a Political Science major with three minors in Public Administration, International Studies, and Campaigns & Elections from Thomaston, Conn.



Emma Birmingham, a Political Science major with a minor in International Business from Enfield, Conn.



Gianna Fiore, a Marketing Communications and Advertising major with a minor in Statistics from Methuen, Mass.



Zoey Wexler, a Forensic Chemistry major with a minor in Math from Manchester, Conn.



Jessica Brown, a Health Studies major, and student in WNE's 3+3 Doctor of Occupational Therapy Program from Douglas, Mass.



Taylor Geist, a Forensic Chemistry major with a minor in Psychology from Charlotte, N.C.



Shaina Cooney, a Health Studies major with a minor in Chemistry from Montgomery, N.Y.



Naressa Kempadoo, a Health Sciences major with a minor in Chemistry from Holyoke, Mass.

10th Annual WNE University School of Law Awards Dinner Shines a Spotlight on Distinguished Alumni

On Thursday, November 7, Western New England University (WNE) School of Law hosted its 10th Annual Law Alumni Awards Dinner at the Marriott Springfield, celebrating three exceptional alumni for their leadership, contributions to the legal field, and dedication to service.

Hosted by the WNE Law Alumni Association, the event recognized and celebrated the recipients of the Dean's Alumni Excellence Award, the Ascending Alumni Award, and the Distinguished Alumni Award. President of the WNE Law Alumni Association, Nicole Mule L'17, emceed the event, while Dean of the School of Law, Zelda Harris, and Vice President for University Advancement, Dean Hickey [on behalf of President Robert E. Johnson], shared remarks.



Dean's Alumni Excellence Award

At the discretion of the dean of the WNE University School of Law, the Dean's Alumni Excellence Award is given in recognition of alumni who have a record of service to the school, community, state, nation, or world that demonstrates the core values of the School of Law.

The **Honorable Michael Wu L'83**, Superior Court Judge for the Hartford Judicial District - Criminal Division was this year's Dean's Alumni Excellence Award recipient. Wu works on family, housing, and juvenile matters, and is a member of the Dean's Advisory Council at WNE, where he served as a former chair.



Ascending Alumni Award

Spotlighting the achievements of alumni who have graduated from the School of Law within the past 10 years, the Ascending Alumni Award honors graduates who have shown leadership, drive, and potential in their chosen field and/or in the community.

The 2024 Ascending Alumni Award recognized **Michelle Tsang L'17**, Trial Attorney at the New York County Defender Services (NYCDS). Tsang founded the Asian American and Pacific Islander affinity group at the NYCDS and is an active member of the Racial Justice Litigation Committee. Outside of work, she dedicates her time mentoring law and prelaw students.



Distinguished Alumni Award

The Distinguished Alumni Award is given to alumni who have made significant contributions to the legal profession and society while exemplifying leadership, ethics, and integrity.

This year's honoree of the Distinguished Alumni Award was **Amy Wilson L'97**, Superior Court Assistant District Attorney, Deputy Chief, Special Victims Unit. Wilson has one of the highest recent trial conviction rates in Hampden County, as well as being noted for successfully prosecuting several high-profile and media intensive special victims' cases advocating for children and victims of violence.

Class Notes

STAY CONNECTED

Your classmates want to know about the milestones in your life. Send your news, including weddings, career changes, accomplishments, and publications to the Office of Alumni Relations at alumwne@wne.edu, or visit alumni.wne.edu/classnotes to submit your note online.

1970s

Robert Madison G'71 (MBA) published his second book, *Biography of Lt. Richard Falley, Jr., Revolutionary Soldier, Patriot & Armorer*, highlighting a slice of western Massachusetts history. He explores the long military career and contributions to the Revolutionary War of this Westfield and Montgomery Mass. colonist.

John Hargrave L'77 (JD) has entered retirement from his firm in Barrington, N.J., John W. Hargrave and Associates. He practiced bankruptcy law and served as a Chapter 7 Bankruptcy Trustee for 37 years.

Paul Federici '78 (Accounting) was honored as the 2024 Grand Marshal of the East Longmeadow, Mass. Fourth of July Parade. The Grand Marshal is selected based on their actions and impact on the community.

Randy Economidy '79 (Marketing) was presented with the first annual Western New England University men's ice hockey Alumnus of the Year Award.

Stewart "Buz" Eisenberg L'79 (JD) was appointed by Gov. Maura Healey to the board of trustees at Greenfield Community College (GCC). He served on the GCC faculty from 1996 to 2017, chaired the GCC Assembly from 2002 to 2017, is now a member of the GCC Senior Symposium Board, and has been a practicing attorney for over 40 years.

1980s

Debra (Fuller) Gardner '82 (English) has been recognized by the Glenmeadow Life Plan Center in Longmeadow, Mass. with an inaugural Age of Excellence Award. This recognition shines a spotlight on individuals that are not only redefining aging, but also reshaping our perceptions of what it means to live a life full of dedication and vigor beyond the age of 60.

Athan Vontzalides L'83 (JD) has retired after 39 years of practice as a partner in the law firm of Ankeles, Vontzalides, Ambeliotis & Delaney LLP situated in Peabody, Mass.

The Honorable Philip Roche L'85 (JD) has stepped into retirement after serving as the county and family court judge for Steuben County, N.Y.

Kevin Roche L'87 (JD) has been selected for inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in America 2025* list for insurance law, insurance litigation, personal injury litigation – defendants, and professional malpractice law – defendants. He is an attorney with Halloran & Sage LLP. Best Lawyers lists are compiled based on peer-review evaluation.

1990s

Teresa Conrad '90 (Management) was elected as chairperson of Hanscom Federal Credit Union's board of directors. She has been a board member since 1999, served as vice chairperson since 2021, and held the position of chairperson of the Hanscom FCU Charitable Foundation since 2022.

Dean Dulchinos '90/L'93 (Finance/JD) was appointed managing director and head of real estate credit at ORIX Corporation USA. He brings with him over 20 years of experience building and managing global commercial real estate platforms in senior leadership positions.

Edward Hourihan, Jr. L'90 (JD) was named the 2025 "Lawyer of the Year" by *Best Lawyers in America* for Construction Law in Rochester, N.Y. Only one lawyer from a city in any practice area is nominated with this accolade every year. He is a litigation attorney and managing member of Bond, Schoeneck & King's Rochester office.

Vincent Liberti, Jr. L'92/'08 LLM (JD/LLM) has been selected for inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in America 2025* list for elder law, trusts and estates. He is an attorney with Halloran & Sage LLP. Additionally, he just published the second edition of his book, *Preparing for your Elder Years: Taking Charge of Estate Planning, Long-Term Care, Asset Protection, and Medicaid*.

Jeremy Payson '94/G'01 (Accounting/MBA) has been promoted to executive vice president, finance at Greenfield Cooperative Bank. He has been with the bank since 2022 and is recognized for fostering a culture of advancement within the company.

Kevin Greene L'95 (JD) has been selected for inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in America* 2025 list for labor and employment litigation. He is an attorney with Halloran & Sage LLP located in Hartford, Conn.

Thomas Dawley, Jr. '95 (Criminal Justice) was appointed as the police chief of the Pittsfield, Mass. Police Department after serving a year as interim chief. Since joining the Pittsfield Police Department in 2002, he served as a patrolman, then later patrol sergeant, patrol lieutenant, and eventually the detective bureau captain overseeing the crimes scene, digital forensics, and anti-street crime units.

Karin Sloan DeLaney L'95 (JD) joins Bousquet Holstein PLLC as a member of the firm's trusts and estates practice. She joins Bousquet Holstein after ten years of successfully leading her boutique trusts and estates law firm, Sloan DeLaney, PC, in Baldwinsville, N.Y. Bringing 30 years of experience, her blend of big firm practice with small firm personalization has earned her a trusted reputation in the area.

Allen Falke L'96 (JD) has been honored in *The Best Lawyers in America* 2025 list in tax law. He has been recognized in Best Lawyers since 2022. Falke is the practice leader of Mirick O'Connell's Trusts and Estates Group and a member of the firm's business group.

Kristen (Blake) Gordon '96 (Management Studies) started a new position as director of alumni relations at Central Connecticut State University.

Susan McCoy L'96 (JD) has been selected for inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in America* 2025 list for trusts and estates. She is an attorney with Halloran & Sage LLP.

The Honorable Francisco Calderon L'97 (JD) has been elevated from Cohoes, N.Y. City Court Judge to the esteemed role of New York State Court of Claims Judge. Before his tenure on the bench, he was an assistant district attorney for 16 years in Albany County, after eight years as their deputy conflict defender ensuring fair legal representation for all.

Lt. Mark Gualtieri '98/G'00 (Law Enforcement/Criminal Justice Administration) has been promoted to lieutenant with the Billerica Police Department in Billerica, Mass. He has been with the department since 1995, transitioning from the town's fire department, and was promoted to sergeant in 2002, then was placed on the NEMLEC Tactical Police Force as a SWAT officer in 2004.

Clarissa Wright L'99 (JD) was elected as a 2024 Black Leader of Massachusetts. Practicing law for the past 22 years; she first served in the Worcester, Mass. district attorney's office, later moved to Hampden County where she has been the assistant district attorney for the last 12 years. Wright also engages in volunteer work locally through the district attorney's office, Women Lawyers of Color, at the local Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. chapter, and as a Board of Bar Overseer.

2000s

Joshua Pedersen '00 (Accounting) has been named a partner at HarperWhitfield P.C., a certified public accounting firm. Pedersen has been with the firm since 2000, first as a staff accountant, then manager, and later promoted to director in 2023.

Brad Malicki L'00 (JD) has been selected for inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in America* 2025 list for real estate law. He is an attorney with Halloran & Sage LLP.

Jeffrey Rousseau '00 (Criminal Justice) was appointed as the District 3 representative on the Enfield, Conn. Town Council. He currently serves as the captain and commander of the Hartford, Conn. Detective Bureau.

Jessica Hansen '02 (Sport Management) has been promoted to senior director of finance and human resources for the Springfield Thunderbirds. She has been with the organization since 2017 and is a key member in growing the team's in-game charitable presence.

Jody Lemoi '02/G'04 (Sport Management/MBA) has been promoted to the director of budgeting, strategic finance, and financial systems at Mount Wachusett Community College.

Lt. Commander John Harring '03 (Criminal Justice Administration) was promoted to operations commander at the Billerica Police Department in Billerica, Mass. He joined the department in 2001, and then became a K-9 handler in 2009. Harring was promoted as the commander of the NEMLEC K-9 Unit, then moved up the ranks to sergeant in 2014, and lieutenant in 2020.

Shelley Rose '03 (History) has been promoted to professor of history at Cleveland State University and enters her 14th year of teaching at the institution. Additionally, she was awarded the 2024 Outstanding Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity Award for their College of Arts & Sciences.

Jocelyn Roby L'04 (JD) has entered self-employment starting Massachusetts Title Services, a company where she provides title exams and title related services to real estate attorneys in the Commonwealth.

Warren Nelson, Jr. '05 (Law Enforcement) has officially retired after 32 years of loyal service to the Town of Bolton, Mass. He joined Bolton in 1992 as a patrolman, then progressed up the ranks becoming a patrol supervisor, sergeant, and then lieutenant before being appointed as the chief in 2015.

Patricia Troiano '05 (Sport Management) was promoted to superintendent for recreation in the Town of Greenwich, Conn., Parks, and Recreation Department.

Kelly Touhey-Childress '06 (Psychology) has been named the programs and people cultivator for the Racial Unity Team, a New Hampshire nonprofit. She joined the team in 2022, serving as the administrative director. In her new director-level position, Touhey-Childress will provide management, planning, and leadership for the volunteers and community partners, as well as help meet strategic planning goals.

Jessica Caron '08 (Social Work) began a new position as account executive at Carelon Behavioral Health.

Stephen Hennessey, Jr. '08 (Sport Management) has returned to Franklin Pierce University, starting a new position as their associate athletic director. He was previously with the institution from 2013-2022 as an associate director of admissions.

Daniel Carey '09/G'10 (Accounting/MSA) has been promoted to senior vice president, chief financial officer at Cambridge Savings Bank. Carey will lead highly skilled finance teams while also providing financial reporting guidance, compliance, and capital management.

2010s

Joshua Risen L'10 (JD) was appointed as the town clerk for Great Barrington, Mass. He will serve as the town's chief election officer, maintain and preserve the town's archives and vital records, among other roles. Prior to Risen's promotion, he served as an office administrator for the town manager and selectboard.

Tim Conrod '11/G'13 (Sport Management/ MBA) has begun a new position as director, global business development at Shutterstock where he will be focusing on developing strategic partnerships with the world's leading companies in the generative artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning space.

Jillian Strycharz '11 (Management) was promoted to deputy chief human resources operations - employment services with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. She has been with the organization since 2014.

Casey O'Connell L'12 (JD) has been selected for inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in America* 2025 list for real estate law. He is an attorney with Halloran & Sage LLP.

Alyssa Caliguri '13 (Psychology) was promoted to director of admissions and student affairs at Webb Institute. She has been with the institution since 2022, first serving as the assistant director of admissions and student affairs, then as the associate director of admissions and student affairs.

Dennis Carnelli L'13 (JD) has been distinguished in the 2025 edition of *Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch® in America*, for appellate practice, commercial litigation, and insurance law in the same city for the fifth year in a row.

Lindsay D. DiSantis L'13 (JD) has been elected as a new corporator for the Community Bancorp of the Berkshires, MHC, the parent company of Adams Community Bank. She is a managing partner at Hunter, Graziano & DiSantis P.C. in Lee, Mass.

Shaune Sousa '13/L'16 (Political Science/JD) has started a new position as a trust advisor at Choate, Hall & Stewart LLP.

Kristen Whitlow '13 (Communications - Public Relations) has started a new position as digital communications manager at Mount Holyoke College.

Hannah Faulkner '14 (Psychology) received a promotion at the Center for Children with Special Needs, transitioning to the new position of consultation director. She has been with the organization since 2018 helping provide consultative services to special education programs within public school systems.

Kelsey Jobe '15 (Mathematical Sciences) has started a new position as a mathematics instructor at Central Carolina Community College.

Mark Simmons '15 (Sport Management) has started a new role as parks and recreation and youth services bureau director for the Town of Preston, Conn. He brings with him over a decade worth of experience in various progressive roles in recreation and programming for all age groups, including seniors. Additionally, he was named top 30 under 30 for the National Recreation and Park Association last year.

Kelsey Armstrong '16 (Secondary Education - English) started a new position as associate director of athletics for academic success at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She brings with her experience from Sacred Heart University where she had served in student-athlete support services since 2019.

David Cherry '16 (Sport Management) has started a new role as an area manager II for Amazon.

Sarah Normandie L'16 (JD) recently published her first novel, *All These Threads of Time*, under the pen name Sarah Crowne. It debuted on Amazon and ranked in the Top 100 Teen & Young Adult (YA) science fiction, as well as in the Top 10 for YA time travel new releases. In November she published her second book, *Rebel Writers: The Genius Behind the Pen*.

Rachel Bean '17 (Biomedical Engineering) was promoted to senior research and development engineer at AngioDynamics. She has been with the medical technology company for over five years.

Paul Harris, Jr. '17 (Sport Management) has started a new position as programs manager with the Dallas Stars (NHL) and the Dallas Stars Foundation.

Paige (Young) Kinney '17 (Secondary Education - Mathematical Sciences) has started a new position as senior data analyst at Trinity College in Hartford, Conn.

Natasha Mercado-Santana '17/G'19 (Marketing Communications, Advertising/Communication) has started a new role as marketing and event manager at *BusinessWest*, the business journal of western Massachusetts.

Nicole Powers '17 (Mechanical Engineering) has been promoted to materials and process engineer at Kamatics.

Chaskiesha Figueroa '18 (Sociology - Crime & Society) started as area coordinator at the University of Vermont - Burlington after serving as community coordinator for the University of Cincinnati, Ohio for three years.

Meghan Flaherty '18 (Communications - Public Relations) received a promotion to senior assistant director of admission at Lasell University. She has been with the institution since 2022.

Garrett Jones '18 (Criminal Justice) has started a new position as a senior manager of membership sales with the New York Islanders.

Jennifer (Luba) Kazeroid '18/G'20 (Sport Management/Organizational Leadership) transitioned into a new role in June 2023 as the director of finance and business services for the University of Massachusetts Amherst Athletics Department. She has been with the institution since 2020.

Ryan Kazeroid '18/G'19 (Accounting/MSA) began a new role in October 2023 as the director, finance & administration for the American Hockey League (AHL).

Devin Kindred '18 (Management and Leadership) has transitioned to Nichols College as the director of residence life & community standards.

Iman Mazza '18 (Accounting) has been promoted to manager, finance transformation at PwC. She has been with the company since 2017, starting as an assurance intern, then ranking up to assurance associate, assurance senior associate, and then to management consulting - finance transformation senior associate.

Ryan Samuels '18 (Accounting) has been promoted to senior tax manager at PwC.

Michael Spagnolo '18 (Accounting) was promoted to manager at PwC. He has been with the firm since his internship in 2018, transitioning to full-time in 2019.

Kristen Breen '19 (Sport Management) has joined the Denver Broncos (NFL) as their community programs and events coordinator.

Caitlyn Marchand '19 (English) has transitioned into a new position as a pathway coach at Bunker Hill Community College.

Tyler Simons '19 (Sport Management) has transitioned into a new role at Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School as the athletic director and dean of students. He is the school's first ever full-time athletic director and dean of students and has been with the institution since 2020.

2020s

Erin Butts '20 (Actuarial Science) of MassMutual has obtained her Fellow of the Society of Actuaries (FSA) designation. FSA is a professional certification awarded by the Society of Actuaries (SOA) to actuaries who have completed a rigorous educational training program and have passed a series of challenging exams.

Cole Eiber '20 (Criminal Justice) has graduated from St. John's University School of Law and accepted an offer as the assistant district attorney in Queens, N.Y. District Attorney's Office.

Ryan Hartnett L'20 (JD) has been selected for inclusion in "*Upstate New York Super Lawyers – Rising Star*" for 2024. He is an associate attorney practicing at Hancock Estabrook, LLP in their corporate, tax, and startup & emerging business practice areas.

Matthew Nardi L'20 (JD) has been promoted to senior associate attorney at Rafi Law Group. Nardi will continue to provide exceptional legal representation to clients in personal injury cases, further strengthening the firm's commitment to delivering justice for those in need.

Sarah Waterhouse '20 (Secondary Education - English) has joined the faculties of Western New England University, University of Bridgeport, and South College as an adjunct professor of English.

Allison Buzzeo '21 (Arts and Entertainment Management) has been promoted to assistant director of undergraduate admission at Suffolk University. She has been with the institution since 2021.

Jason Ortiz L'21 (JD) joined the Royal Law Firm as a business litigation attorney. He brings several years of trial experience, having tried many cases to verdict. Ortiz specializes in commercial litigation, including construction disputes, evictions, insurance defense, employment, and other civil disputes.

Allison Bruehwiler '22/G'23 (Sport Management/Organizational Leadership) has started a new position as the recreation and senior programs coordinator for Preston Parks and Recreation in Preston, Conn.

Kristina Bullock '22 (Accounting) has been promoted within MP CPAs from associate to the position of senior associate. She has been with the firm since 2021.

Sarah Jackman '22 (Biology, Forensic Biology) started a new position as a forensic scientist in the DNA unit with the Massachusetts State Police.

William LaFosse '22 (Marketing) has been promoted to Western New England University's annual giving officer. He has been with the University's advancement division since 2022.

Brian Moss '22 (Accounting) was promoted within MP CPAs from associate to senior associate. He has been with the firm since 2022.

Taylor Pedley '22 (Mechanical Engineering - Mechatronics Concentration) has been promoted to systems engineer II - requirements management at ZF Group. She has been with the company since 2022.

Thomas Thayer '22 (Business Analytics and Information Management) has been promoted to senior strategic sourcing analyst with Collins Aerospace.

Bryce Thompson '22 (Accounting) was promoted within MP CPAs from associate to senior associate. He has been with the firm since 2021.

Lindsey Carey '23/G'24 (Civil Engineering Environmental Concentration/MSE) has started a new position as staff environmental engineer at Environmental Chemical Corporation (ECC).

Ryan Hoover '23 (Criminal Justice) started a new role as the residence director at Westfield State University. Before this position, he was the resident director at Saint Anselm College for the 23-24 academic year.

Danielle McCarthy '23 (Marketing, Sport Management) joined Franklin Pierce University as their director of athletic communications.

John "Jack" Williams IV L'23 (JD) has joined Fitzgerald Law, a business advisory law firm with locations in Massachusetts and Connecticut. He will focus on transactional matters, including commercial real estate and finance, corporate governance, and business contracts.

John Falco '24 (Business Analytics and Information Management) started a new position as IT assurance associate at Grant Thornton (U.S.).

Connor Fallon '24 (Biomedical Engineering) has started a new position as prosthetic technician at Hanger Clinic. The company is the nation's leading provider of orthotic and prosthetic care, specializing in the treatment of mobility and musculoskeletal conditions caused by illness, injury, or congenital differences.

Riley Franzo '24 (Biomedical Engineering) has started a new position as R&D electrical engineer 1 at Boston Scientific. She had interned part-time with company since 2022.

Maria Khan '24 (Pharmaceutical Business) has started a new position as a hospital account liaison with AdaptHealth.

Rachel Knauerhase L'24 (JD) has joined Bulkley Richardson as an associate in their business department. She brings with her intern experience from her time at the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office and at a boutique litigation firm in Connecticut.

Andrew Loin L'24 (JD) has joined Bulkley Richardson as an associate in the real estate and business departments. He was a summer associate at the firm in 2023 and completed internships with Green Miles Lipton and the Hampden Probate and Family Court.

Lukas Radina '24 (General Business) has started his new role as an assistant coach for the men's ice hockey team at Western New England University.

Ethan Roy '24 (Biomedical Engineering) has started a new position as product quality engineer at Neuraxis.

Theodore Zwinski '24 (Comm/Media & Journalism) has started a new position as a news producer at WWLP-22 News.

SEE MORE ONLINE

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

Marriages



Emily Lucarelli '21 and Joshua MacDonald,
October 1, 2023, in Hamilton Township, N.J.



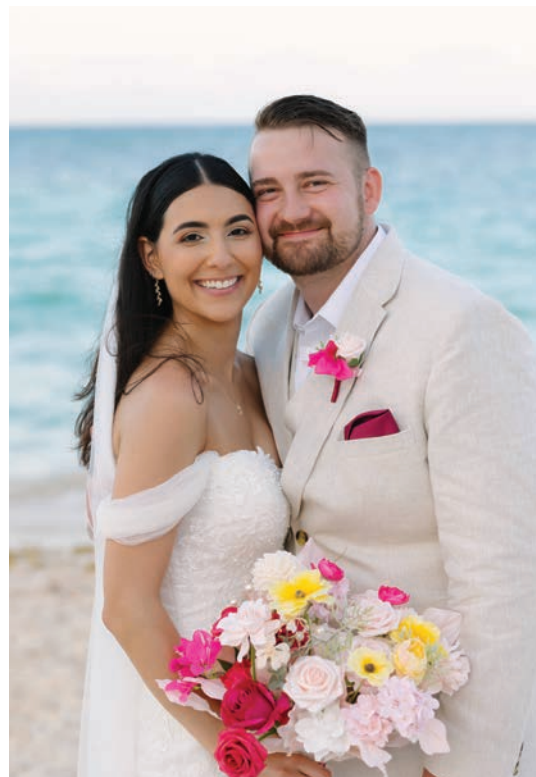
Kristen Molina '22 and Nolan Zweep '22,
June 23, 2024, in Breckenridge, Colo.



Jennifer Luba '18/G'20 and
Ryan Kazeroid '18/G'19,
August 4, 2024, in Wolcott, Conn.



Bradley Kneeland L'16 and Cory Harman,
September 12, 2024, in Las Vegas, Nev.



Toni Ambrosino '19 and Alex Parker '19, May 18,
2024, in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic.

Baby Golden Bears



Joselyn Rose, August 29, 2024, to **Samantha (Flamand) Colonna '20** and **Matthew Colonna '20**

Emersyn Rose, February 16, 2024, to **Katina (Dorff) Simmons '14** and **Mark Simmons '15**



Kirby Helene, February 9, 2024, to **Jessica (Abelson) Wasserman '09** and Jason Wasserman



Kara Rose, July 16, 2024, to **Sarah (Stevens) Salce '15** and AJ Salce

UNRESTRICTED CONNECTIONS

Western New England University provides students with the opportunity to participate in experiences that will help them flourish beyond graduation. Here, students are challenged to become problem-solvers while working with others so that they have the necessary skills to lead and contribute to our world. With this approach, every student understands the power of interpersonal connections and they are equipped to navigate their own journey with passion and purpose. Your gift to The Fund for WNE makes all that, and more possible.

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Contact The Fund
for WNE at
thefund@wne.edu
or 413-782-1335.



CURTAIN CALL

WNE's Stageless Players took the stage with their fall performance of Oscar Wilde's, *The Importance of Being Earnest*.



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