

UB Knightlines



LIFE ISN'T ABOUT
*finding
yourself*
LIFE IS ABOUT
*creating
yourself*
George Bernard Shaw

The Art of the Possible

Inside: Facing the Eclipse – Softball and Dental Hygiene – Annual Report



President's Line

This year's *Knightlines* focuses on students — past and present — who are doing amazing work. My favorite article is about softball pitcher and dental hygiene student Kaite Burawski, who has battled back from cancer to lead our team to this year's NCAA tournament. Her story is about how achievement and service go hand in hand, but also about resilience. Our university and community have proven that resilience time and time again.

This year alone we have experienced increased alumni engagement, new partnerships, and incredible contributions. We had the biggest homecoming in many years at Knights Fest 2023. We had the biggest UB RISE (Research, Innovation, Scholarship and Entrepreneurship) event ever, held during National Public Health Week to shine a light on the amazing work we are doing in healthcare. This year we welcomed a new Subway®, eSports stadium, Knights Pantry, and manufacturing center to our campus. We are stronger than ever.

On April 8, our students, faculty, and staff gathered to watch the solar eclipse, while a group of engineering students traveled with Professor Jani Pallis to Texas as part of the NASA-backed Nationwide Eclipse Ballooning Project. They had to adapt to changing circumstances and to utilize the inner resilience they learned here at UB. Over the past century, students like Kaite Burawski, faculty like Jani Pallis, and alumni like you have exemplified that resilience.

We have come a long way since our founding in 1927, but our future has never seemed so bright.

Sincerely,

Danielle Wilken
President

President Wilken speaks
at the Business of Sports
Symposium in Fall 2023

UB Knightlines

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ON THE COVER
UB students and staff watch the April 2024 eclipse at the John J. Cox Student-Center

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The Art of the Possible

UB Students Learn to Adapt During a Total Solar Eclipse

In April 2024, a team of UB graduate and undergraduate students traveled to Texas as part of the NASA Nationwide Eclipse Ballooning Project. As one of 53 teams from colleges and universities around the country, they had the opportunity to study the rare total solar eclipse occurring on April 8, sending up a high-altitude balloon to the stratosphere to record and livestream the eclipse.

The project was led by Dr. Jani Pallis, who has served on UB's faculty since 2008, first as an associate professor in Technology Management, and now as full professor in Mechanical Engineering. She founded and served as CEO of an aerospace engineering company that secured millions of dollars in NASA educational grants, offered her expertise and analysis to the United States Tennis Association, and brought dozens of unique learning opportunities to UB students.

Staff and students watch the solar eclipse from Waldemere lawn.





Right: The balloon's view of earth from the stratosphere
Below: Dr. Jani Pallis and engineering students practice for the launch

Under her leadership, UB labs work with essential organizations like NASA and the U.S. Navy, setting us apart from many engineering schools. Students are also encouraged to join professional networks and establish professional connections. “We tell our students to work on as many projects as they can,” said Pallis. “That will differentiate their resumes from other candidates in the job search process.”

During this particular collaboration with NASA on high-altitude balloons, UB served as a central hub for the teams participating in the project from the northeastern United

States. Our own team has been working for the past few years in the lead-up to this event, designing, testing, and building high-altitude weather balloons and the equipment needed for communication and data collection. That data helps to solve problems like the existence of atmospheric gravity waves, while also giving our students the chance to develop aeronautic and communication technologies from scratch.

Along with Dr. Pallis and engineering assistant Vamsi Sripada, graduate and undergraduate students on the team included lead Huy Huong, Mohammad Al-Torzi, Brandon Galvan, Sushma Gudi, Daria Howard, Lambert Shell, Jr., and Juan Urrea Vargas. Before the launch, the team visited Hall Neighborhood House, Homes for the Brave, Mercy Learning Center, McGivney Community Center, and Bridgeport Hope School for outreach. “It was an opportunity for students to share their knowledge,” said Melanie Strout, Director of Civic Engagement. “The community gets to learn more about what we do.”

Originally from Missouri and living in Stratford, Connecticut, team lead Huy Huong is a double major in Computer Science and Mathematics, with a minor in Physics. “There’s no moss growing under his feet,” says Dr. Pallis. “He read everything related to the project. He touched everything. He built anything he could, even if he didn’t quite understand, then he’d get help. That’s a true test for somebody who’s going to succeed in our field.”

“I feel like I did take a leadership role in this,” said Huong. “I was the first person on the project, where the initial testing was just me sitting in a corner of the engineering building and seeing what would work.”





The UB Engineering team gets ready for peak totality

“We had to go with the flow and as plans changed, make the best of it. There’s always a lot of things out of our control; you can’t predict everything.”



On the way to Texas, everyone the UB team met seemed to be traveling to watch the eclipse in an atmosphere of celebration. Many approached the students with questions after noticing their stuffed bear mascot wearing NASA-approved eclipse glasses. When the team arrived in Texas, they unpacked their equipment, set it up, and made sure nothing was damaged in shipping (which it wasn't). During the following two days, they practiced for the launch and made sure the equipment was ready for the big moment. The other two teams in their “pod,” Olin College and University of Delaware, were lodged nearby, and Huong helped Delaware with a few minor equipment issues, ensuring they were properly connected and communicating.

“Huy was a huge help and always patient, positive, and constructive,” said Dr. Ed Nowak, Physics and Astronomy Professor at University of Delaware. “The Delaware team was grateful for his collaborative spirit and the genuine camaraderie we established with him in such a short time.”

The project involved launching a video-streaming payload that connected via ubiquity radios, to live stream the event at a floating altitude of 70,000 feet. This was real-world, hands-on education, where UB students had to solve problems and adapt to changing situations in the moment. “When you’re in class, it’s just a lot of theory,” said Huong. “It’s different when you see the actual process and have to plug in a wire and see what will happen. That’s engineering.”



On the day of the eclipse, after five years of predictions made by NASA, the south Texas winds changed. That meant the place they planned to launch from would no longer work and so the three teams started looking for another position where the winds would be right. In the dark pre-dawn, they tried to avoid cacti and tarantulas and set up their equipment in a new place. This was true “reality education” in the field.

“We had to go with the flow and as plans changed, make the best of it,” said Huong. “There’s always a lot of things out of our control; you can’t predict everything.”

That attitude helped when more seemed to go wrong. As the balloon launched, one of the three tracking systems fell off. Another got a reading and then stopped, while the third worked up to 90,000 feet before stopping. Because of that, they couldn’t communicate data in the moment, and worse, couldn’t figure out where the balloon landed. The students adapted to these circumstances and did what they could to make the day a success. “I find athletes to often be great engineers,” said Pallis, laughing. “Because they know how to just brush off three strikes and say, ‘what’s next.’”

As the totality approached, everything went dark and streetlamps flipped on across the continent. It was a magical moment for scientists and sky-watchers alike. Nearly 2000 miles away on UB’s campus, students, faculty, and staff gathered on the pedestrian mall and at Waldemere Hall, using the NASA-approved glasses to watch the partial eclipse. Crescent-shaped shadows fell on the ground as the entire community bonded over this unique event. Farther afield, groups of alumni, such as the one led by Lynn (’84) and Michael Schneider (’84), traveled

to Lynn’s hometown of Buffalo. They had flown to South Carolina for the previous eclipse in 2017 and planned three years ahead for this one. “I encountered a lot of skepticism that I would get anyone to join us, but when the smoke cleared, we led a group of 28 friends and family up there,” said Michael. “We are now thinking of going to Iceland in 2026 for the next one.”

Now, months later, the team continues to participate in data analysis of the event and will communicate with local Texas authorities (such as game wardens and sheriff’s offices), narrowing down where the balloon might have landed. “The people in Texas have been absolutely fantastic,” said Pallis. “People there, and everywhere in the United States, were so willing to help these teams successfully complete the mission.” She anticipates finding the balloon in the vast territory, despite the obvious challenges.

UB engineering students are launching smaller balloons in the summer of 2024, and looking forward to possible 2026 and 2030 NASA campaigns, when the University will continue to work with the top ballooning scientists in America. “The people we work with are in the center of everything in this field,” said Pallis. “This eclipse is over, but we immediately started to plan ahead. Some of our colleagues are developing balloons for use on Venus, while others are using telescopes on high altitude balloons from Antarctica.”

The next eclipse totality in the contiguous United States will occur in August of 2044. You can be sure that UB teams and alumni will be there, celebrating the magic and pioneering the science, teaching the art of the possible to the next generation. ■



Softball and Teeth

Surviving Cancer and Getting Back in the Game

By Abigail Levandoski

They say that playing a sport builds character, but UB softball pitcher Kaite Burawski shows us that sometimes it's character that builds champions. Her remarkable journey began long before she faced the unimaginable — a battle with ovarian cancer — and her tenacity through the trial exemplifies a person whose achievements are sure to keep growing long after her tale of survival is a mere footnote in her story.

Originally from the tiny town of Hartly, Delaware, Kaite had her sights set on playing UB softball and studying Dental Hygiene from a young age. "When I looked up Dental Hygiene schools with softball programs, I found UB," she said. During her junior year of high school, Kaite toured Bridgeport for the first time, and committed to playing softball for the Purple Knights soon after.

Her long-time pitching coach, George Pechin, noted that Kaite has always been sure about two things. "She's always told me, 'All I care about is softball and teeth.'"

Kaite began her UB journey with a clear vision for her future — a college softball career followed by a long and fulfilling career in the dental field. She earned her associate degree in Dental Hygiene in May 2022 and returned that fall to complete her bachelor's degree while working as a dental hygienist and playing softball.

Kaite Burawski faces
classes, batters, and
cancer on her way
to victory



Right: UB's softball team earned an at-large bid into the NCAA East Regional as 7th seed this year
Below: Kaite and her pitching coach, George Pechin

After 13 games during Kaite's first year of college, the COVID-19 pandemic led to the cancellation of the remainder of that season. In 2021, she led the entire nation's Division II teams for the most strikeouts. "She's by far the best pitcher we've ever had here at UB," remarked Coach Dawn Stearns.

In September 2022, Kaite began experiencing a series of mysterious illnesses. She would get cold and flu-like symptoms, or high fevers that wouldn't go away. Her energy levels suffered significantly. As someone who never needed daily naps, Kaite began to require them to get through her day. "I was always tired," she recalled. "I had to go to urgent care with random illnesses that no one could diagnose throughout that fall."



On Thanksgiving night of 2022, Kaite was lying on the couch after dinner and she began experiencing severe abdominal pain. That pain resolved itself, but after returning to school, she noticed a recurring ache in her pelvis. "I was lying in bed one night, and I was feeling my abdomen, and I actually felt the mass," said Kaite.

She then experienced a fever that lasted more than 14 days. When she went home for Christmas, she was sent for an ultrasound and the ultrasound tech could not find Kaite's left ovary. A following trip to the ER led to Kaite's cancer diagnosis. Two days later, Kaite went into surgery to have the mass — a 15 cm tumor that was encasing her left ovary — removed.

It was not until the following week that Kaite and her family learned the mass was cancerous. Luckily, despite the size of the tumor, Kaite's ovarian cancer was only stage 1 — treatable with chemotherapy after removing the tumor. Still, it was a form of cancer that is often difficult to catch early. Most women don't experience symptoms until their ovarian cancer has begun to spread. According to the American College of Radiology, "Ovarian Cancer ranks fifth in cancer deaths among women, accounting for more deaths than any other cancer of the female reproductive system." Kaite was among the approximately 19,000 women who received an ovarian cancer diagnosis in 2023.

Kaite tried to remain focused on her dental hygiene classes and softball. "I had to call and tell coach Dawn," shared Kaite. "That was hard." Dawn reassured her that she would not lose what was supposed to be her senior year of softball. She would still get to come back and play after she got healthy again.

Kaite began her chemotherapy treatment back at home in Delaware on January 23, 2023. During this time, she reconnected with her long-time pitching coach, George Pechin, also a cancer survivor. The two maintained regular communication throughout Kaite's treatment, with Pechin able to relate to her daily struggles and offer his own advice on how to manage them. He even encouraged her to watch cooking shows on TV to keep her appetite up after chemotherapy sessions.

On April 21, 2023, while driving up to Bridgeport with her family to watch what was supposed to be her "senior night" double-header games, Kaite received the call that she was officially in remission. During the team huddle before their first game, she got to tell her teammates that she was cancer-free.

Nevertheless, she still had a long struggle ahead of her with the aftereffects of chemotherapy. In the classroom, she struggled to focus for long periods and has noticed some changes in her memory. On the field, she experienced numbness and tingling in her hands and feet, a common side effect of cancer treatment. That means she has to squeeze the ball harder than she thinks she should, and can't always feel her foot plant after pitching the ball.

As soon as Kaite finished chemotherapy, she began working with Coach Pechin to rebuild her strength. Before cancer, she could pitch a 67-mile-an-hour fastball (the average Division II college softball pitcher can toss around 58 miles per hour). During her first pitching lesson after finishing chemotherapy, she pitched 62 miles per hour. "By the end

of the summer, she was able to pitch 63 miles per hour even after throwing 100 pitches," said Coach Pechin. Within a few months, she went from lasting 5-10 minutes per lesson to throwing more than 100 pitches in a session.

Kaite returned to the mound at UB in the fall of 2023. "It was nice to come back and start to feel normal again," she shared. During her first game back, the opposing team, Southern Connecticut State University, gave Kaite a standing ovation after her first pitch — a standing ovation that Coach Stearns had to later tell Kaite about because she was so focused on her game that she didn't notice it happening. She pitched three innings and threw nine strikeouts that day. During her third game back, she notched an incredible 14 strikeouts. By Spring 2024, she rose to Number 2 in the CACC with 119 pitches, eclipsing 700 career pitches, and was named to the "Pitcher of the Year" watch list. The team reached the NCAA tournament East Regional division.

Kaite's experience as an athlete meant she was highly in tune with her body, and so she recognized when things didn't feel right. Fortunately, doctors were able to diagnose her cancer early enough to ensure her chances of survival. Still, it may very well have been her determination to get back on the pitching mound that helped her not only fight but survive.

When asked why she chose dental hygiene as a career, Kaite found herself at a loss for words. "I always struggle to answer this question," she said. "When I went to the dentist growing up, I always really liked it." For her, it's always been about softball and teeth. ■

“She’s by far the best pitcher we’ve ever had here at UB.”
—Coach Dawn Stearns.





Top to bottom: The new eSports stadium ready to go; Knights Pantry opens a new improved site; UB staff has fun at the bowling alley; Subway takes its first customers at its Student Center outpost

The Student Center Levels Up

The lower level of the John J. Cox Student Center has always been a place to gather to eat, study, and play pool or ping-pong. With the addition of the bowling alley in 2019, it became a venue for UB staff and student events. Now in 2023-24, three new additions have made it the premier destination on campus.

First, a grant from Connecticut Foodshare made it possible for the Knights Pantry to move operations here. The Knight's Pantry initiative aims to address food insecurity among students, providing vital resources to ensure their well-being and academic success. The updated location is larger, with more room for food and other pantry staples, and more accessible to students.

Second, Subway® Sandwiches opened as a third place for on-campus students to eat and relax. Alum Fred DeLuca's pioneering chain, Subway, was first conceived here in Bridgeport. Now, students can eat delicious subs on fresh-baked bread courtesy of Sodexo.

Finally, a new eSports stadium has been built in the space previously occupied by the bookstore (which has moved to the lower level of Wahlstrom Library). This incredible next-generation laboratory will take our new eSports team to the top of their games.





Learning to Fly

UB Celebrates 114th Commencement Ceremonies

By Abigail Levandoski

On Saturday, May 4, 2024, UB hosted back-to-back undergraduate and graduate commencement ceremonies at the Hartford Healthcare Amphitheater in Bridgeport. The clouds gave way to bright, sunny skies, and rain held off as more than 1,200 graduates accepted their diplomas while a crowd of family, friends, and UB faculty and staff looked on.



In her opening remarks, President Danielle Wilken acknowledged the remarkable achievements of the graduating class of 2024. She declared that the class of 2024 stood out as a model of civility and respect, a testament to the character and the values learned from faculty and staff. Drawing from her personal and professional experiences, Wilken asked everyone to look ahead to their futures and encouraged them not to be afraid to fly.

Following the undergraduate student speaker address, alum and Doctor of Humane Letters recipient Robert Padula congratulated the class of 2024, encouraging them to always give back to their communities. Renowned civil rights attorney Benjamin L. Crump received an honorary degree and delivered an impassioned, fiery commencement address, encouraging the graduating class of 2024 not to be spectators in life but to jump into the arena and do something for someone.

The day's remarks formed a unified message for UB's graduates — the future is yours to embrace, yet as you spread your wings and learn to soar, don't forget to uplift those around you. ■

President Danielle Wilken shares a laugh with Doctor of Humane Letters awardees Benjamin Crump and Robert Padula



University of Bridgeport PA students are competing at the highest levels

Physician Assistant Students Win National and State Titles in Academic Challenge Bowls

Students from the school's Physician Assistant Institute are the recent winners of both national and state titles in the 2023 medical challenge bowls. These competitions test students' knowledge of physical diagnoses, microbiology, anatomy, emergency medicine, pulmonary care, cardiology, primary care, and obstetrics. Teams from UB came in first and third place at the Connecticut PA Student Day held at University of St. Joseph on April 15, 2023. Then, a team representing UB won the national title, coming in first place at the 33rd AAPA National Medical Challenge Bowl, held by the American Academy of Physician Associates



(AAPA) on May 22, 2023, in Nashville, Tennessee. UB's team competed against 89 other collegiate squads, including local teams from Yale University, Quinnipiac University, and Northeastern University.

The UB team that took the national title in Nashville included PA students Nick Tuttle, Lauren Asmus, and Juliana Garofalo. Against stiff competition from other leading PA programs, the squad tested their medical knowledge and eventually took home the top prize. "Our confidence in our preparation was key," said Nick Tuttle. Lauren Asmus agreed: "We are so excited to have made our UB community proud."

Purple Knights Coffee Company Launches a New Brand



The Purple Knights Coffee Company (PKCC) offered its first batch of coffee for sale in autumn 2023. PKCC is an experiential learning program located in the Ernest C. Trefz School of Business that is designed to help UB students by providing an on-campus internship, while creating a real business that puts coffee into the mugs of alums, students, and the public.

“Purple Knights Coffee provides our students with an opportunity to learn valuable entrepreneurial skills, while helping coffee farmers in Latin America,” said Tim Raynor, Director of the School of Business. “It is 100% student built and run; this is amazing considering the complexity of operating a business that collaborates with partners and suppliers in multiple countries.”

Shreya Shresthra, a graduate student in the School of Business, joined the company as creative director to help prepare the first round of production. The work allowed her to gain academic knowledge in a realistic business environment, as well as to develop essential skills. “I knew that being a part of a student-run company would provide a variety of learning opportunities,” she said. “This experience has led to a deeper understanding of customer behavior, market trends, and the importance of brand positioning.”

The first CEO of this new company is Shivakantha Naganaik, a double major in the master’s programs in Finance and Business Analytics. “UB is like a family,” he said. “And now we have created a better way to get students industry ready and help other people while doing it. Isn’t that what family is all about?” ■



To Be Unbroken

by Abigail Giron Marroquin and Yemarah Dallas

On September 14, 2023, Dr. Trisha Bailey spoke before a packed house in the Student Center as she talked to Dr. Randy Laist, UB professor and the Chair of the English department. She was there to talk about her book, *Unbroken*, in which she recounts the struggles in her life and how they eventually made her who she is today — a resilient entrepreneur and the wealthiest Jamaican-born woman. To become successful, Dr. Bailey advises the audience, you must “keep your blinders on.” According to her, this means continuing on one’s own straight path.

During the hour-long conversation, Professor Laist asked Dr. Bailey about her life. She reflected that as a young girl she was tormented by her teachers and peers — teased for her accent and sprayed with aerosol sprays. Despite the pain, Dr. Bailey says that experience is one of the reasons why her heart is loving. She finds it her responsibility to inject young people with love and positivity so “that they can feel good, they can be empowered, and they can feel like they can literally fly.”



Unbroken offers a poignant narrative of resilience and perseverance that serves as a source of inspiration. Through her gripping story of overcoming adversity, she encourages readers to view challenges as opportunities for personal growth and motivates them to persist in their educational pursuits despite obstacles.

“I am so happy that I decided to disclose all the things that I did in my book because every person who has ever read it has told me how much it has inspired them,” said Bailey. “It has given them hope.” ■

Professor Jim Casey Leaves a Rich Legacy

It was with great sadness that everyone at University of Bridgeport learned that Professor Jim Casey had passed away on February 8, 2024.

While at UB, Casey taught Biology and Natural Sciences, including courses as varied as Winter Dendrology, Field Biology, Biosurvival, Long Island Sound in the Classroom, and Connecticut Natural History. “Jim brought an incredible wealth of field experience to the classroom and was great at using that experience to connect with students,” says fellow Biology professor and former Dean Kitty Engelmann. “He also had incredible stories about encountering everything from jaguars to fire ants. This unique real-world experience was one of the many things that excited students and formed the basis of his one-of-a-kind courses.”

Professor Casey was the leader of many of UB’s Bio Survival trips, camping trips, and boating trips on Long Island Sound, and he collaborated with environmental groups like the EPA and Save the Sound. One of his most recent contributions was to the Seaside Gateway Trail Project.

With the goal of connecting Seaside Park to the community, this project was made possible through the generosity of many local and regional community and business partners, including UB’s Office of Civic Engagement. The first section of trail connects the Perry Memorial Arch on Waldemere Avenue with two new entrances located at Marina Park Circle and Howe Avenue. Seventeen storm-resistant, native trees were planted along the walkway, and Professor Casey and his students helped care for them throughout 2022 and 2023.

“Witnessing the progress of the Seaside Gateway Trail has been very exciting for the faculty and students here at UB,” Casey said in 2023. “In addition to bolstering plant and pollinator biodiversity and further beautifying the already wonderful Seaside Park, the area will provide an outdoor classroom where students might meet for field-based science lectures and labs. The trail will foster a sense of place and encourage students to get outdoors and take pride in our beautiful setting here.” ■

Professor Jim Casey speaks to students at the grand opening of the Seaside Park Gateway Trail





Finding Purpose

First-Generation Professor Elise Fles Makes UB Welcoming for All

Only a few years ago, the Chair of the Psychology Department, Professor Elise Fles, was a first-generation college student. “I never even thought about getting a PhD,” she says. “I was basically an alien to my family.”

Fles grew up in Muskegon, Michigan, once a booming manufacturing town. “It’s a very similar town to Bridgeport,” she says. “And one thing that I noticed early on, when I was young, was that there were a lot of problematic views, for example, about race or gender,” she continues. “I was always critical of that and was interested in psychology, especially social psychology, because I think it helped me understand people and why they thought the way they do.”

Fles received her PhD in Experimental Psychology and immediately came to Connecticut. “I defended my doctoral dissertation and within two weeks I was here at UB,” she says. “Within six months we were dealing with the pandemic and then less than a year after that I was chair.” It was a lot for a young professor to handle, but she has maintained her focus on student success while developing new ways to convey complicated concepts in statistics and research methods.

Along the way, she has systematized the curriculum, helped rework the Psychology site labs, and created materials to help graduate assistants. “As chair, Dr. Fles has done incredible work not only building resources for her

students in the Psychology degree, but also developing strategies to help other faculty do the same,” says Amy Nawrocki, Dean of the College of Science and Society. “She’s a fantastic teacher, dedicated advisor, and an ideal member of the faculty.”

Fles has also worked with places like New Canaan, Connecticut’s Silver Hill Hospital to pilot internships with her students, where they follow clinical rounds, shadow group sessions, and run mindfulness sessions for patients. Some of her Psychology graduates go on to the University of Bridgeport Counseling Program, some go on to get their master’s in nursing, and others get jobs at places like Silver Hill. “In the future, I want to create more opportunities for students to engage with the Bridgeport community,” she says. “Part of the college process is finding out what you like, and what you don’t like. So, I want our undergraduates to have these experiences so that they know what they really want to do with the rest of their lives.”

Dr. Fles’s incredible drive to make UB a more welcoming place for all is what really keeps her going. It has allowed her to navigate her first few years as a professor at the University and provide for students who are historically underrepresented in higher education. “We’re so eclectic at UB. That’s a really huge asset,” she says. “I just happened to come here, but I’m staying here on purpose.” ■

Dr. Elise Fles welcomes students to her office in Carlson Hall

Seeing the Whole Field

Diversity and Teamwork Build Soccer Teams' Character and Skills

Every year, students from all over America and all over the world come together to play soccer on University of Bridgeport's Knights Field. In that way, the soccer squads are microcosms of the way that diversity and teamwork interact in the larger UB community.

"It's amazing, because we hear so many different languages every day," says captain of the men's team Lucas Sousa. "UB is a place you can experience a lot of diversity, first of all, and second of all, you can express yourself how you want to. It's a place you can be yourself."

“Our biggest role as captains is that we’ve been through it. We’re just trying to share our experiences with these young athletes.”



“We have players from different cultures, different upbringings all coming together and forming, you know, the basis of a successful team,” agrees Coach Peter Doneit. “That will happen as long as they display the desire to want to be part of the team, to integrate with the team, and be selfless.”

After playing at Hartwick College and professionally in South Africa and Argentina, Doneit started as a goalkeeper coach for UB in 2001 before becoming full-time assistant coach in 2008 and, finally, earning a promotion to head coach in 2017. “I had opportunities to go elsewhere,” says Doneit. “But this was always a special place.”

Doneit sees the work he does here as more than just chasing a championship. “We want to make the students, faculty, administration, and alumni proud. We want to bring something to the community, and lift a trophy,” he says. “But I am also looking for the best human beings that I

Previous page: Angelina LoFranco fights for the ball
Above: Lucas Sousa dribbles around opponents
Below: Coach Tania Armellino

can find.” As a coach, Doneit cultivates that by drilling the students every day, not just with on-the-field skills, but things that some coaches

might overlook, like being on time and having good body language. “Everyone’s happy scoring goals,” he continues, “but when you hit a tough patch, and people are second-guessing strategies, that’s when you see how they deal with stress and setbacks.”

Playing a team sport builds that character, along with skills that help students succeed after college. Center midfielder and business major Lucas Sousa was born in Brazil but has lived in Connecticut for several years. He was named Conference Player of the Year and first team all-Conference. “He has high field IQ,” says Doneit. “He can control the tempo of the game when we have the ball and be the spine of the team.” As center midfielder, Sousa needs to be everywhere on the field and act both defensively and offensively. “Seeing the whole field is very important,” Sousa says. “You have to be aware of all situations and concepts during the game.”

From the office next door, women’s soccer coach Tania Armellino echoes Doneit’s sentiments. “Character is everything,” she says. “It’s not even about the game. It’s about who you’re going to become.”

Armellino has only been at UB for two years after serving as head coach at SUNY Plattsburgh, but she grew up in nearby Milford, Connecticut. She clearly remembers learning about the great programs at the University as a child. “As a young person, my introduction to UB was soccer,” she says. “People who played here played at a great level.”



Side Lines

**Right: Vivien Ruetters
takes control**
**Below: Coach Pete Doneit
lays down the law**



The women's team include 16 players from 13 countries, as well as players from around the United States. And just like the men's team, the focus on character and teamwork is paying dividends.

"My three years here have definitely taught me how to be a leader," says one of the captains, Health Sciences major and center back Kayla Leake. "I feel like I found my voice. It translates outside of soccer, to the classroom and time management."

Nursing major and center mid-forward, co-captain Angelina LoFranco, agrees. "Being on such a diverse soccer team definitely changes how you view other peoples' worldviews," she says. "I can use what I've learned from the team and apply it towards my future."

Kayla comes to UB from Maryland and Angelina from Florida, while the third captain, Psychology major Vivien Ruetters, comes from Munich, Germany. She says that the UB team is "like a family" and has taught her how people

from everywhere can come together in "the core values of the human community." "Communicating is interesting with such an international squad," she says. "Every country teaches soccer differently and so we have to learn how we can play off of each other and can play with each other, rather than saying 'that's wrong' or just playing American soccer."

Like Lucas Sousa on the men's team, they praise the many skills they have improved while on the team. "We learn to take constructive criticism," says Leake. "Once we leave college and get jobs, our bosses will tell us that something needs to be better. And we will be able to take that criticism and apply it next time and not get defensive or upset."

"It teaches you how to recover when things aren't going the way you want. If you're down a goal, are you just going to give up? You're going to have ups and downs," agrees LoFranco. "You have to lead by example and treat your teammates the way you want to be treated."

In that way and in many others, the soccer teams at University of Bridgeport are great examples of how sports fulfill our mission statement, by providing an international, culturally diverse, supportive learning environment that prepares graduates for life and leadership in an increasingly interconnected world. "I am building new relationships every year," says Leake. "I'm learning how to communicate and connect with many different types of people from all over the world." ■



Coach James Howard and Next-Play Mentality

When former Georgetown University Hoyas coach James Howard arrived at UB in 2023, he knew that he had been brought here for a reason. “We are trying to rebuild and restore the young women’s confidence here,” he says. “God brought me here for a reason, to be able to give them that.”

After the Big East Conference, Bridgeport might have seemed like a strange choice to some, but not Howard. “I’m a coach by nature and I don’t want to sit and not do anything. I have so much to give to the game and give to young people,” he says. “So, I saw the position here open at Bridgeport and I didn’t apply to anything else. Then, when I walked on the campus, I fell in love.” He took a walk from the seaside campus down to Long Island Sound and thought, “This is my million-dollar recruiting walk.”

There were many practical changes, to

be sure, from meal preparation to overnight travel. But Howard has a long career educating teams at many different levels. “James brings a wealth of knowledge and experience at the highest levels of women’s basketball,” says Jay Moran, Vice President of Athletics and Recreation at University of Bridgeport. “He will help move the team forward to compete in an ultra-competitive conference and region.”

His coaching style at UB focuses on defense and getting the players to work as a group, increasing what he calls the team’s “basketball IQ.” “We are pushing creativity, the ability to dribble, pass, and shoot, getting back to the fundamentals of the game of basketball,” he says. “I’m trying to change the culture of the team and teach them why it’s important to talk about wanting to be champions, but more importantly teach them what goes into being champions.”

Stephanie McBride
drives to the basket



Coach James Howard changes the UB basketball culture, one player at a time

"This is an exciting moment for our women's basketball program and University," said President Danielle Wilken. "James's reputation as being a 'players coach' is the ideal fit for the school."

"Coach Howard is changing the whole culture here," agrees Lorraine Galow, coach of the women's gymnastics team. "They really needed somebody like him."

Team captain Stephanie McBride says that she can see those changes already. "We're competing every day and getting better," she says. "That's what the team needed." As captain and a senior, McBride has taken ownership of the obligations and complexities of leadership. "Everybody is different, so we are learning how to work with different personalities and learning how to come together and learn from each other," she says. "I have to be an example to my teammates, show them what to do, and be a voice for the team and represent them."

“There are always going to be ups and downs. But getting back up in basketball and in life is going to build character for every last one of these young women.”

McBride believes that being captain helped her with public speaking and plans to take the leadership skills she has learned at UB into the business world after graduation. "Sometimes you make decisions that may not always turn out the way you wanted," says McBride. "But you learn how to bounce back and have that next-play mentality."

"There are always going to be ups and downs," agrees Howard. "But getting back up in basketball and in life is going to build character for every last one of these young women."

Both players and coach have built that next play mentality over a tumultuous season. For the players, perhaps, it comes from learning that important next-play mentality. For Coach Howard, it comes from serving yet another group of young women and helping them become more than they were. He has done that many times in a long career, but every group and every individual player is different. ■

Coach Kranthi Senadhi and Player-Driven Empowerment

Coach Kranthi “Krunch” Senadhi sits in his modest office in Hubbell Gymnasium, talking clearly and gently about the sport he loves. The sounds of basketballs bouncing on the polished wood of the gym floor echoes down the halls and through the door. “This was always a dream job in the sense that I knew I wanted to be a head coach one day,” says Senadhi. “And there isn’t any place better than University of Bridgeport because I was an assistant here and grew a lot during that time.”

“Krunch” has been Senadhi’s nickname since fourth grade and he keeps it amongst his players as a sort of “stage name” on the court. In 2011 he arrived as assistant coach at UB and stayed for nine seasons, serving under Coach Mike Ruane. He loved the diversity of the students, loved Seaside Park, and loved how close Bridgeport was to New York and other great places to live and work. “I kind of fell in love with Bridgeport,” he admits. “And I loved the way Coach Ruane ran the UB team, which was very different than most Division II college basketball coaches.”

That early impression was reinforced by experiences with micro-managing coaches and saw the flaws in that approach. So, influenced by Coach Ruane, the system that Senadhi has his team run is fast-paced, emphasizing decision-making amongst the players. The style forces them to be disciplined in their actions, but also creative in their gameplay. “We play something like old school basketball,” says Senadhi. “The guys are making decisions and playing at a fast pace, handling the ball in the perimeter, receiving, reversing, touching the ball 100 times during the game.”

The 2023-2024 season had many ups and downs, falling to schools like Dominican University and defeating others like American International College. Their victory over the historic basketball program of the Cheyney University Wolves saw the Purple Knights scoring the most points since before the pandemic in an 118-72-point triumph. The many three-pointers and rebounds are both a tribute to UB’s style of play. “We’re a new team, with a lot of moving parts,” Senadhi continues. “We have great student-athletes who are trying to revive and renew the culture here.”

Hailing from Brooklyn, with Guyanese roots, Sam Desouza,



Coach Kranthi Senadhi plans the attack, but leaves decision-making to the players

22, transferred to UB to earn a master’s in business administration, and to play as a forward on the team. Against Cheyney University he totaled 10 points, six rebounds, three assists, and one steal. He scored 19 points against both Dominican and against American International College. “Basketball is all I’ve known,” he admits. “I just fell in love with the game and willed myself to keep going.”

DeSouza loves the fast-paced UB system and how it emphasizes decision-making. “I feel like the system itself helps you to grow as a player on and off the court,” he says. “You have to be disciplined, more disciplined than the other teams, in order to succeed.”

Twenty-three-year-old Bobby Sullivan is from nearby Trumbull, Connecticut, and is also getting his master’s in business administration, with a focus on marketing and data analytics. “Coach Krunch was a guest speaker at a basketball camp I attended, and through that I started a conversation with him, coming to games at University of Bridgeport,” reminisces Sullivan. “He says that he is going to teach us how to play but that we are the ones on the floor. He gives us the opportunity and the freedom to be able to choose.”

Coach Krunch’s philosophy of empowerment leading to success is one reason that the athletic community remains a vital part of University of Bridgeport. “We’re trying to get them to make decisions like NBA players in a lot of ways,” continues Senadhi. “And that’s really the way we’re trying to change the program and in the long run develop our players.” Through discipline and an emphasis on decision-making, he is helping his players succeed now, in their classes, and in their future beyond college.

“Good teams are coach-driven,” says Senadhi meaningfully. “Great teams are player-driven.” Then he walks back into the gymnasium, where his players are already practicing, the rhythmic sounds of a dozen basketballs echoing to the rafters. ■

Hello, Fellow UB Alumni,

Once again it is my privilege to greet you in the latest *Knightlines*. So much has happened over the past year and there is so much to look forward to. Most exciting are huge increases in alumni support and involvement. We have had 69% growth in alumni attendance at our monthly events since 2022. The alumni relations team is working hard to bring us together. Let's keep up with this amazing growth in engagement.

Over the past year there has been a new calendar established including regional alumni gatherings, events such as the Yankees vs. Red Sox Game and Mardi Gras party, and revived events such as the upcoming UB Golf open to be held at Tashua Knolls Golf Course. Plans are being made for the upcoming UB Centennial, which will be celebrated in the years leading up to 2027 and beyond. You are all encouraged to join fellow alumni and the UB team for these and many more occasions.

I want to highlight a few of the exciting things happening soon and invite you to be an active supporter in 2024 and beyond.

- 1) The Alumni Board of Directors held a general meeting of Alumni last October for the first time in over 10 years. This was long past due and was well attended. We plan to have our next "annual" meeting October 22, 2024, a hybrid in-person and virtual event. We hope even more of you join us.
- 2) The Alumni Business Directory went "live" and is now gaining traction as a location for alumni entrepreneurs and business owners to advertise on the UB website. Go to the UB Alumni homepage to see more and contact Yvrose Romulus at the Advancement Office if you would like to sign up your alumni-owned business.
- 3) The annual UB RISE (Research, Innovation, Scholarship and Entrepreneurship) event was just held in April. I am proud to say that Alumni have become essential participants and supporters: providing poster judging, serving as panel members, helping with event logistics, and notably providing awards. Mark your calendar for Friday, April 4, 2025 for the next UB RISE.
- 4) Join us on campus to see the many visible improvements which have occurred and get a sense of the many "unseen" things contributing to campus vitality. Noteworthy for the future are the renovations planned for our venerable Cortright Hall, slated for essential improvements and dedication as the Undergraduate Admissions Office and Welcome Center.

There is much more I would like to talk about, but the best thing is for you to come to the campus and join UB alumni events in your area. Yvrose Romulus at the Advancement Office is always happy to talk with you and help you with any arrangements. Reach out to her at yromulus@bridgeport.edu or 203-576-4801.

Sincerely,

Bill Moran '74
President, University of Bridgeport Alumni Association





Alumna Wins Prestigious Milken Educator Award

By Abigail Levandoski

Ashley Dunne fell in love with music in elementary school. From a young age, it was in the music classroom that she felt safest and most connected to her educational experiences. “I had a lot of wonderful teachers along the way who made the music classroom feel like such a welcoming place for me,” she said. “I really felt at home in the music classroom.”

Ashley found some of her best friends in music class, having played the violin since third grade. It made sense to her family and friends when she planned to major in music education when she left for the University of Connecticut as an undergraduate student.

While finishing her studies at UCONN, Ashley heard about the master’s in Education

program at University of Bridgeport. “I started hearing a lot about this wonderful master’s program at UB,” she said, “and my mom was a UB alumni.” Shortly after graduating from UCONN, Ashley began studying for her M.Ed. at UB.

Developing her educational philosophy

When asked what stood out to Ashley during her time at UB, she considers her internship the most impactful part of earning her master’s degree. Through UB’s connections to over 65 local school districts, master’s students work in a school for a full school year while attending classes 2-3 evenings per week. “I made some great connections during my internship, which

A surprised Ashley Dunne enthusiastically accepts her award

Alumni Lines

was just invaluable,” she adds. “I got to learn about how a school was run. From something as simple as how to work a copy machine to how to manage a classroom, I worked through all those growing pains during my UB internship.”

This internship component provides more than \$25,000 in scholarships that go toward the students’ master’s program. “That made me so much stronger when I went into my interviews looking for my first full-time job,” Ashley recounted.

Ashley credits the foundations of her teaching philosophy to her education at both UCONN and UB. The coursework and faculty were instrumental in helping Ashley envision how her future classroom would operate. “I want the music classroom to be a joyful place for my students; a place where they feel like they can be themselves and feel at home in the school.”

Ashley found her calling in the school district she called home as a child, Southbury, Connecticut. She teaches children music at Gainfield Elementary School. Her husband, a fellow UB alum she actually met at the program’s M.Ed information session, also teaches elementary music education.

Receiving the Milken Educator Award

It came as no surprise to anyone (except Ashley) when she was selected, in secret, as a 2023 Milken Educator Award recipient.

The Milken Educator Awards were created in 1987 by philanthropist and education visionary Lowell Milken. This teacher recognition program empowers awardees to “celebrate, elevate, and activate” the K-12 profession and inspire more young people to pursue teaching as a career.

Ashley was one of 75 recipients selected nationwide during the 2023 awards season. The accolade also comes with an unrestricted financial award.

As the school music teacher, she was tasked with setting up the assembly in which she would be honored as a Milken Educator award recipient. However, Ashley quickly realized this “Gainfield Gathering Day” was different from other past assemblies she’d prepared for. First, she noticed the Board of Education and the State Commissioner of Education were present, then members of the media. Still, Ashley hadn’t realized she was the guest of honor just yet.

“I went up in front of everyone with my ukelele and began singing the school song with all the students,” she said, “Then the superintendent spoke, the Commissioner of Education spoke, and finally, Dr. Jane Foley began to speak about the Milken awards.” Ashley was excited as she realized that one of her colleagues was about to be honored at this assembly-turned-awards ceremony, still not realizing she was the awardee.

When the moment came, Ashley handled the surprise in true music educator fashion, singing the song she had been teaching her students, which tied back to a school-wide social emotional learning theme, “Don’t Worry, Be Happy” by Bobby McFerrin.

Ashley works to be intentional in everything she does in her career as an educator. Stemming from lessons she learned in part during her master’s program at UB, she wants her students to feel seen and heard. In her classroom, she displays a quote for all her students to see and internalize every day, “I see you. I believe in you. You’re safe to grow and thrive here. I want to hear your voice.” ■



UNIVERSITY OF BRIDGEPORT GOLF TOURNAMENT RETURNS!

**TASHUA KNOLLS, TRUMBULL, CT
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2024**

Breakfast, lunch box, and cocktail hour, contests for closest to pin and longest drive, and more!

To support or sign up for the Golf Tournament contact Rob Gerowe at 203.576.2433 or rgerowe@bridgeport.edu.

Reclaim Your Time and Automate Your Busywork

By Brianna Gagne

University of Bridgeport alum and entrepreneur Aytekin Tank celebrated the publication of his first book, *Automate Your Busywork*. The book explores and explains how people can boost their productivity by eliminating lengthy and repetitive tasks through an easy-to-manage software solution — automation.

Growing up in Turkey, Aytekin Tank found his calling at a young age. After taking a computer programming class in middle school, his lifelong passion for innovative programming and software development was sparked. “It was work that didn’t actually feel like work to me,” he recounts. When his journey brought him to University of Bridgeport in 1996, Aytekin chose to pursue a degree in Computer Science. “My time at UB was invaluable to my career,” Aytekin reminisced. “It really encouraged my love of coding.”

Aytekin’s passion for business started at UB, too. “I was able to build a website for a student organization, which I was a member of at the time,” Aytekin remembered. “I made it available to the world as a free, open-source product and people seemed to really enjoy it. This ultimately ignited my passion for starting a business.”

Having built and refined his professional knowledge and skills, Aytekin graduated in 2000 with a BS in Computer Science. While he possessed the abilities and vision necessary to succeed, Aytekin still faced the problem that many recent grads do when entering the workforce — his first professional role wasn’t entirely what he’d hoped. “I took a job as a web developer for a media company

in New York City, where I found myself building online forms. A lot of them,” Aytekin described. “Forms were one of my least favorite things to code. Even for skilled developers, they can be tedious and time-consuming.”

It was here that Aytekin heard the knocking of opportunity — he could turn monotony into opportunity. “I figured there had to be an easier way for people to create forms but there wasn’t a solution on the market yet,”

UB alum Aytekin Tank offers advice for future computer science students - and everyone else



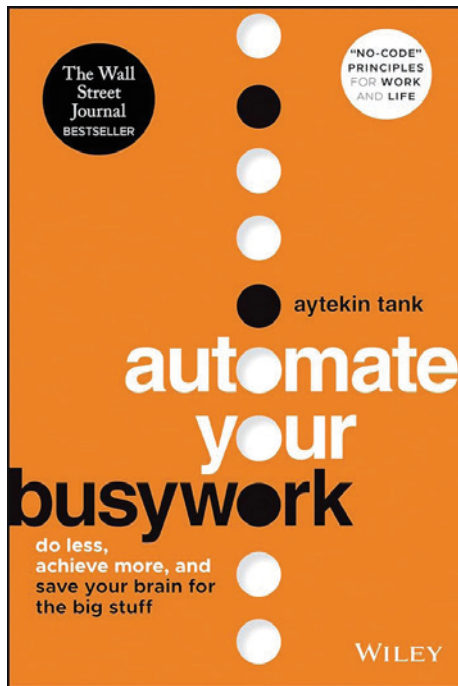
Alumni Lines

he explained. “So, in 2006, I started building Jotform.”

Today, Jotform provides over 20 million users with the form-generating solutions that Aytekin dreamed of sharing. But it wasn't always such smooth sailing. As the 2000s tech and computer industries boomed, Aytekin was faced with a daunting challenge. “Just a few years after starting Jotform, Google entered the online form building market,” he recalled. “I was stunned. How could we compete with a Goliath?”

Rather than give way to intimidation, Aytekin sought a solution that would help Jotform maintain its edge over large-scale competitors. After hours of brainstorming, something clicked. “The light bulb went off,” Aytekin said. “Jotform was founded on the mission to make life easier for people, so I began building automations into Jotform to further that mission and differentiate us in the marketplace against Google Forms.”

Now over 17 years old and home to more than 500 employees, Jotform has succeeded. Releasing a book on the process seemed a natural next step. *Automate*



Your Busywork provides new and experienced professionals with innovative solutions to make the most of their time at work by utilizing automation tools to quickly and accurately complete time-consuming tasks.

“I wrote *Automate Your Busywork* to help people learn how to automate their workflows as I did,” Aytekin described. “The principles I advocate were hard learned over years of refining my own productive habits. It was important to me to share the skills I developed, and to help people free themselves so they could spend their time doing things they love.”

Recalling his experiences as a Purple Knight, Aytekin offered advice for today's Computer Science students. “Work on whatever projects you can get your hands on. Consistently practice your

programming skills, write code regularly, work on personal projects, and contribute to open-source projects,” he said. “This will not only help you gain practical experience but will also provide you with a portfolio to showcase your abilities to potential employers. And you never know, it might just turn into your very own business.” ■

Sam Provost, the Community Engagement Manager for the Bridgeport Islanders, gives a check to University of Bridgeport to support the Dr. Martin Luther King Endowed Scholarship



Alumni Notes

Founder and CEO of Cahoot, **Manish Chowdhary** ('00, '16), won the 2024 Best SaaS product and the global pitch competition at SaaSStock USA in Austin, Texas, beating out hundreds of entries and more than 50 short-listed startups who competed at this international event.

In the past two years, **Aseem Gupta** ('07) was listed as one of the "40 under 40" in his field and achieved his Project Management Professional certification. "UB students, professors, and staff were a great inspiration for me when I was a student," he says. "It is important that I give back to UB to maintain that culture and become an inspiration for future students."

Liz Hempowicz ('10), the Vice President of Policy and Government Affairs at Project on Government Oversight, was just named as one of Washington, D.C.'s 500 most influential people of 2024 by *Washingtonian Magazine*.

Graduate of the ENet program, **Jamilia "4EVA" James**, is a musician, life coach, and author, and has a new book, *90 Days to God*. "I had the blessing of winning Best New Gospel Artist in Connecticut at the Hollback Connecticut Gospel Music Awards," she tells us.

Aramis "Gonzalez" Jordan ('98) has published his memoir, *Searching for My PB&J Sandwich: My American Dream*, which chronicles his journey from poverty to first-generation college student, and continued success. It is a story of triumph over incredible odds and covers his happier times as a student at UB.

Anthony Lopez, who graduated an incredible three times from UB with an associate degree in Business Administration ('15), a BS in Business Administration ('19), and an MS in Secondary Education ('22) is currently a Career & Technical Education Teacher at Stamford High School. "I've been a Purple Knight for life, and I'm not done

yet," says Lopez. "There's still the degree in Leadership coming a few years down the road. I guess that will make four degrees/certificates, and if I get into the Cyber Security Certificate program, that would be five pieces of paper from UB."



Lillian Nash Retires



Magnus and Sharon Nilerud



Bob Padula and one of his many horses

is enjoying service on many boards and his horse farm in Florida with his wife.

Richard Lorigan ('64) and **Sandra Miller** ('63) will celebrate their 60th anniversary in October this year.

Thea Marx ('22) reports that her business, VIS Pre-surgery Support, which started in her course work and continued with the help of UB's Innovation Center, launched its clinical trials in Mysore, India. She also won the "Best in Showcase" award at the 2024 Yale Innovation Summit, along with fellow alum **Clovia McIntosh** ('11, '23), who won the "Showcase Audience Choice."

Lillian Nash ('97, '01) recently retired after 38 years serving University of Bridgeport and its students.

Sharon ('91) and **Magnus** ('99) **Nilerud** celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary (in part) by returning to UB to join the annual Valentine's Day festivities.

Chris O'Neill ('10) took a break from a busy career working as an actor and stuntman in commercials, in music videos, and in the Marvel Universe for Disney Cruise Lines to visit campus in March 2024.

Tiffany Ottani, CPA, ('20) has been promoted to Supervisor at Cirone Friedberg, LLP, where she provides accounting and tax services for individuals and business clients.

Robert Padula ('69) was given an honorary doctorate of humane letters at University of Bridgeport during the May 4, 2024 graduation ceremony. After a long career in the insurance industry, Bob

Alumni Lines

Physical Education graduate Captain **Steven Purcell** ('66) has retired as a Commercial Pilot after 60 safe years in the cockpits of planes from Piper J-3 Cubs to 747s.

Brinet Rutherford, JD ('15) published her first book, *Choices*, which describes the experiences that shaped her journey to becoming a lawyer at the age of twenty-four. Her mother, **Devita Smith**, is currently in UB's EdD Program, and will graduate in 2024.

Bill Moran ('74), **Elena Cahill** ('88, '91), and **E.J. Cohen** ('75), recently had the privilege to speak with **Rita Silverstein** ('49) about her time at UB. "Be very serious about studying," was her advice to current UB students. "Do the best you can with what you're learning."



James ('83) and **Christine** ('83) **Zemola** celebrated their 35th wedding anniversary this year.

Clockwise: Rita Silverstein and her parents at UB dormitory 1940s; Mitch Sanders in the green shirt with friends, 1975; UB Graduates from the 1990s gather at Waldemere Hall



Remembrances

Peter Arcidiacono ('75), of Marco Island, Florida, formerly of New Jersey, passed away peacefully on September 12, 2023. He had a BA in marketing and worked for Michelin Tires Corporation before owning his own business, C&C Tires. He was president of the Marco Sportfishing Club and spent his life with his wife Patty, his family, and the many, many friends who loved him.

Michael H. Nussbaum ('74) passed away after a long battle with cancer.



Mitchell Sanders ('75) passed away on February 4, 2024, after a long battle with Alzheimer's. He played football at University of Bridgeport and helped lead the team to the longest winning streak in the nation at the time. After UB he worked in the insurance industry and competed in countless marathons and Iron Man competitions.

Puja Shreshta ('02) passed away from cancer after a long struggle. At UB she served as RA in the dorms and was a "sweet, beloved, and active student."



MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER



UB ANNUAL REPORT

Dear Friends,

As an alum and a Vice President at UB, I have never been more excited to be here. As you walk across campus, you can feel the hum of anticipation.

Maybe what I am feeling are the first signs of UB's 2027 Centennial. Historical posters have just arrived on campus, the first of many projects that will herald this incredible 100-year anniversary. The celebrations begin now and will become bigger and bigger as we approach our 2027-2028 school year. This is a chance to honor all our generations of students – from your graduating class and to those a hundred years from now.

Our Advancement team is so grateful for your engagement. We have marveled at your wonderful stories and memories you have shared and at your generosity of spirit. We have included a giving opportunity in this year's *Knightlines*, with both QR code and envelope for your convenience. Our latest initiatives provide essential resources for the Centennial celebrations, new construction projects, student scholarships, faculty retention, faculty recruitment, and innovative programs that guide students from education to career.

Donate what you can to this great renewal and come to campus to feel the energy yourself. You are the reason that good things keep happening in our community.

With thanks,

Elena Cahill, JD '88, '91
Vice President of Innovation, Strategy, and Advancement

WAYS TO GIVE

GIFTS OF CASH

Gifts of cash may be made with a personal or cashier's check, or by credit card.

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To give online visit
www.bridgeport.edu/support-ub

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To give by mail, our address is Office of Advancement, 126 Park Avenue, Bates Hall, Bridgeport, CT 06604. To give by phone, call 203.576.2433. Gifts can be made by check or credit card (MasterCard, Visa, American Express). Please make checks payable to University of Bridgeport.

STOCKS AND BONDS

A donation of stock by an electronic stock transfer or by gifting the stock certificate form to UB. Contact the Office of Annual Giving for instructions at 203.576.2433.

REAL ESTATE

If you own property that is not subject to a mortgage and has appreciated in value, a gift of real estate to the University may be an attractive option.

YOUR WILL

You may also make a deferred gift by naming the University in your Will. If you plan to do this, please notify us of your intentions.

GIFTS OF LIFE INSURANCE

Make a substantial gift with modest premium payments. This is also a good use of paid policies no longer needed for family members.





2023-2024 Annual Report

In fiscal year 2024, attendees at our advancement events numbered **1,130**, an **increase of engagement by 51%** since 2023 among students, alumni, friends, family, and colleagues.

Our total donations revenue **increased by 14%**, our number of alumni donors **increased by 35%**, and our donations from alumni **increased by 203%**! That is an incredible record of growth for us, and an incredible record of generosity from all of you.



By the Numbers:



\$215,779.43

Alumni Giving

(Increase by 203% from Fiscal Year 2023)



\$2,750,902.53

Financial Giving

(14% Increase from Fiscal Year 2023)



\$101,235.29

Annual Giving



404

Total Donors

224 of the Donors are Alumni which is a 35% increase from Fiscal Year 2023

2023-24 Snapshot:

1,110 Degrees Conferred

4,110 Total Enrollment

38% Students of Color

52% First-Generation Students

1,225 New Students

134 Full-Time Faculty Members

16 NCAA Division II Varsity Athletics Teams

60+ Clubs and Organizations

Classes of '74 and '71 were the top donating classes in fiscal year 2024

THANK YOU to our Generous Donors

\$1,000,000 and Up

The Bauer Foundation

\$100,000 to \$1,000,000

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Dr. Jani M. Pallis, Ph.D.

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