

# CONFLUENCE

2023-2024 FEATURES STUDENTS, FACULTY, DONORS, AND ALUMNI WHO ARE IMPACTING THEIR WORLD



**UMD**

College of Arts,  
Humanities, & Social Sciences

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA DULUTH  
Driven to Discover

# CONFLUENCE

The Newsletter of the College of Arts,  
Humanities, and Social Sciences at the  
University of Minnesota Duluth

2023-2024

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## DEAN'S CORNER

Duluth fills me with wonder.

Every morning, as I walk my dogs along the Lakewalk, I gaze in awe at Lake Superior. The lake can be calm and placid, or it can be ferocious with large waves crashing on the shore, but it always instills a sense of majesty. When I go for hikes through the Bagley Nature Area or the Hartley Nature Center, I take joy in how I can be in the middle of a city and so close to campus, yet completely immersed in nature. And when I get a delightful ham and cheese croissant at Duluth's Best Bread and run across the street for some much-needed caffeine from Duluth Coffee Company, I delight at living in a place of such bounty.

It's this same sense of wonder that attracts so many of our students to come to Duluth. That wonder comes from the natural beauty that surrounds us, the strong connections between campus and the community, and the top-notch and unique educational experiences that CAHSS can offer.

By bringing together the fine arts, humanities, and social sciences, CAHSS offers its students, staff, and faculty incredible opportunities to collaborate in innovative ways to make a difference and engage with the wider world. I see it every day when I walk around campus. From the thought-provoking speakers who bring new insights thanks to the Alworth Institute for International Studies, to the student presentations about their Undergraduate Research Opportunities Projects (UROPs) undertaken in close collaboration with faculty, to the use of motion capture technology in the MMAD (Motion + Media Across Disciplines) and Viz Labs, to local school kids working with our Art Education students to make party hats and crowns before attending a performance of *Dragons Love Tacos* in the Marshall Performing Arts Center, CAHSS is a place where wonder thrives.

We're also thrilled about new opportunities for wonder on the horizon. With the renovations to AB Anderson Hall coming to completion, we'll be able to welcome students, staff, and faculty back into classroom, office, and collaboration spaces where people can work together to create and innovate.

As you read this issue of *Confluence*, I hope that you will discover some of the many ways that wonder animates and excites members of the CAHSS community—and be prepared to be amazed.



**Jeremy Youde**  
Dean, CAHSS



## EDITOR'S NOTE



*Whitney Jacobson*

**Whitney Jacobson**  
Editor, *Confluence*

When I considered themes for this year's issue that were representative of the arts, humanities, and social sciences, "wonder" came to mind for many reasons—the curiosity that leads students and faculty to ask questions and explore the unknown; the delight felt when learning or experiencing something new and/or astounding; the admiration developed over time as one's knowledge deepens but the unknown expands and/or evolves.

As always, the subjects of this year's stories broadened my conceptualization of the theme.

In many ways, I was pushed to ask what I take for granted—what hard-earned skills have become overfamiliar to me? What remarkable sights have faded into the background? What guiding ideas have I assumed to be true without interrogating them myself? What acts of joy have I brushed off in the race of completing daily tasks?

How lucky am I to have small children at home who invite me to lay on the floor with them and look up? Who ask me why someone has purple hair? Who shriek in delight when Cheerios spill everywhere after they accidentally drop the box? Who want to test what sinks or floats? Who hand me book after book after book to read to them?

In short: how lucky am I to have the daily reminder to look at things anew?

I hope the stories in this year's issue of *Confluence* reinforce the value of wonder for you and encourage you to find more opportunity for it in your routines.

*Photo credit: Amber Langerud Photography*

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Folks of Duluth: Bee



Max Brunner

## CULTIVATING LOVE AND EMPATHY: Alumna Reveals Humanity

In early 2023, alumna Max Brunner (Digital Art and Photography '12) had a longing for human connection, so she took a walk. That walk has led to hundreds of photographs and answers to the question, "What do you love about yourself?"

Those portraits and narratives are collected in Brunner's ongoing photography project, *Folks of Duluth*, which is displayed in posts on Facebook and Instagram. Each post presents a portrait of the person Brunner met on the streets of Duluth and is captioned with their answer to her question, plus some details about their life.

Many, but not all, of the people who are photographed are homeless, and as noted on *Folks of Duluth's* About page on Facebook, Brunner hopes to humanize their experience:

"Creating artwork by the use of photography is a way of life for me. I strive to show parts of humanity that many individuals do not care to think about or often notice at first glance. As a society, we choose what we want to see and through these

photographs and written word, the viewer is confronted with parts of the human condition that are swept underneath the rug. By walking the streets of Duluth, individuals allow me to enter their intimate space in order for me to capture their story, even parts that are not pleasant or socially accepted."

Brunner's process for documenting her conversations has evolved over time. When she began *Folks of Duluth*, Brunner carried around her Canon Mirrorless camera along with a pen and paper to capture stories. She then switched to Google Docs on her cell phone to get notes down faster. Now she voice records the conversations and later listens to them repeatedly to accurately transcribe them.

The project has also evolved to now include an audience beyond social media. Portions of *Folks of Duluth* have been displayed at the Duluth Public Library and in the Zeitgeist Atrium for the Duluth Superior Pride 2023 Art Exhibition. Prints at the 2023 exhibition sold for \$10 with the goal of donating a portion of the funds to local organizations.



Folks of Duluth: Chris

Ultimately, Brunner’s goal for her art is “to create awareness in order to inspire inward change.”

Such awareness is often cultivated by curiosity. Brunner noted, “*Folks of Duluth*, in general, can spark many internal questions, which creates ‘wonder’ and drives our search for explanation and understanding. When I am walking the streets, I might wonder, *Will this person be receptive to me approaching them?*, and *Will this person be safe to approach?* Similarly, the person I am approaching might wonder, *Why is this person approaching me? What does this person want?*”

That spark of inquiry is not limited to initial encounters. Brunner elaborated, “After we part ways from our interaction, I might wonder, *Will I ever see this person again?*, *What this is person thinking about right now?*, or *Did I make an impact on their life just by listening?*”

Brunner’s choice to share the portraits and stories on social media on a weekly basis extends the opportunity for wonder to

viewers, who might ponder: *Where is this person today? Is this person okay?* Conversely, the person depicted might wonder, *Will my story create change?*

Given the plethora of supportive comments on Brunner’s posts, it’s fair to say the individual stories and Brunner’s overall project are cultivating empathy, and not just for the people photographed. In providing a rationale for her question, the *Folks of Duluth* Facebook page’s About section shares: “We can easily take the time to think about another person and reasons for why we love them, yet we seldom give ourselves that same courtesy. So my question for you is, what do you love about yourself?”

**Selections from *Folks of Duluth* will again be displayed during the Duluth Superior Pride 2024 Art Exhibition from August 30 - September 30, 2024 in the Zeitgeist Atrium.**



Students and attendees working on creative projects at the "A Day of Kindness & Connection" Event.

## TESTING THE LIMITS OF KINDNESS: Writing Course Builds Connections

At the end of Fall 2022 semester, after extending multiple opportunities for students to catch up and successfully finish her course, Instructor Susan Perala-Dewey (Writing Studies) wondered, *Is it possible to be "too kind" to one another, in our careers, studies, families, communities? And if so, why? If not, then why not be as kind as we can be to one another?*

She decided to explore that question with her WRIT 3140: Advanced Writing for Human Services students in Spring 2023 with the intent of lowering student stress and anxiety. Perala-Dewey explained, "Everyone going into these professions has a stake in learning how to manage stress and anxiety. I wanted students to experience how kindness (and noticing kindness)

can elevate our mood and discover through research just how impactful and necessary kindness is to our human experience."

In order to achieve those goals, Perala-Dewey challenged her students to "to look around, notice, and record acts of kindness and connection from their daily lives in a journal." Each week in class, they reflected not only "on what they noticed, but more importantly, how it made them feel, think, and act."

An overarching takeaway was, "There is a lot of kindness in this world, but sometimes it can be difficult to see unless you are looking closely."

To help students further understand the science of kindness and connection, student teams chose a theme or topic and examined how kindness and connection influenced that area. They next identified an audience who might be impacted by their research and wrote to that audience in an effort to make change. Most of their pieces were published either in the *UMD Bark* or *Duluth News Tribune*.

The class didn't stop there, however. Perala-Dewey rallied both her in-person students and her fully asynchronous online students to host A Day of Kindness & Connection at UMD on April 18, 2023, in the Kirby Rafters, Swenson Atrium, UMD Library Atrium, and Kirby Tabling area.

Perala-Dewey recounted, "The Rafters event kicked off with a welcome by You Matter President, Megan Bump, and a traditional Native drum song by Nick Smith. Students and volunteers (some former students) wore UMD Connections Matter T-shirts and 'Be Kind' bracelets, as they challenged the student body to make 'intentions of kindness' and participate in activities to explore kindness and connections through games, letter writing, music, and art. Students printed and posted their research findings in visual form, along with their reflection of their journaling project for participants to view and learn from."

A Day of Kindness & Connection materialized via the qualities it promoted. The day was co-sponsored by You Matter, a student organization focused on supporting students with mental health

struggles and the UMD Kathryn A. Martin Library. The event was additionally supported by a CAHSS Teaching & Learning Grant, the UMD Department of English, Linguistics, and Writing Studies, the UMD Department of Art and Design, and the UMD Bookstore. Perala-Dewey also noted, "the CAHSS Journal Club (and Kelsey Pederson, Emma Ricke, and Jennifer Webb, along with Associate Dean Mitra Emad) played a big role by helping me form my vision and encouraging me to carry out the Day of Kindness & Connection!"

"Students and faculty who attended were really moved and appreciated the opportunity to relax with simple activities, conversation, and music," Perala-Dewey reflected. "Students are truly stressed out and need ways to manage their stress and anxiety. Genuine kindness is incredibly important to our relationships, our workspaces, our mood, and our mental and physical health. I believe we have an obligation to help students (and each other) learn about and manage our stress, anxiety, depression, and loneliness. We can learn together and experiment to see what happens—that's what teaching and learning are all about."

Students shared her sentiments in their reflections. One stated, "I have been surrounded by kindness this week ... All of these things have drastically changed my mood the last few days. I cannot be more thankful to these people in my life. Some barely know me and yet, they still are willing to go above and beyond for me ... Kindness and love [are] real."



Nick Smith performs a traditional Native drum song to start the Rafters event.



Dr. Mitra Emad (left) with Instructor Susan Perala-Dewey (right).



*Students taking Communicating Difference: An Introduction to Race, Power, and Identity in Communication in Spring of 2024.*

## **OPENING THE CONVERSATION: A New Course Bridges Divides**

If one has never been taught how to find common ground and create avenues of communication across difference, how is one to learn those skills? In spring 2023, the Department of Communication launched a new, required core course, COMM 1020: Communicating Difference: An Introduction to Race, Power, and Identity in Communication. The new requirement was designed to ensure students graduate with basic skills for effectively communicating across differences, particularly when

those differences are identities socially constructed and/or affected by a deep history of oppression or marginalization.

Contrary to what some might expect, students seem eager to learn this material. Dr. Ryan Goei (Communication) emphasized, "They want the tools to communicate effectively about difference and with diverse others. We thought students might resent it given the toxic political dialogue around these issues,



but the vast majority of students are grateful for it, even if it is just because they want to help so they don't harm themselves or others with mindless communications."

Instructor Jean Farrell (Communication) built on those remarks, stating: "Indeed, students appreciate gaining knowledge and skills to navigate what are often troubled waters. Before class one day, a student asked if we were going to talk about Israel/Palestine and Hamas. I felt we should, but I was also rather hesitant to do so with the headlines regarding teachers getting into trouble for such discussions. On the way to class, it dawned on me: 'don't talk ... LISTEN.' So, I explained to the class the request that had been made, my expectation that all would remain respectful to each other, that they'd do some quick research on the topics, and discussion would follow. Our TA and I went around to the tables, asking questions, like what sources were they using for information. After about forty minutes, we listened to summaries from each table. A common theme was that it was empowering to talk safely about something so controversial."

One recent student, June Weber (Communication '26), reflected, "I had to put myself in the shoes of people who are different from me, and that really helped me grow as both a student and a person. After taking this class, I feel my empathy and communication skills have grown exponentially."

Still, teaching these topics can be difficult. Goei explained, "I have had to reach deep into multiple modes of engagement to

encourage them to fully engage with these complicated issues and rehearse their own voice. The gap between reading and learning about these issues and actually developing fluency in talking about them is large. So, I incorporate a diverse set of engagement/testing modes to encourage students to develop their voice on these matters."

In one project, students do an "outreach" with a group they'd like to know more about. For instance, many students said they had been "clueless" on common issues of aging. So, some did their "outreach" with an elder in their family where they learned about and bridged a large and unnecessary generational gap. Farrell noted "there were many powerful stories shared about the student's experiences during the assignment; the opportunity in this class for peer teaching and influence is simply wonderful."

Students are not the only ones benefiting from the course. Goei reflected, "This class has helped me a lot. Before this class, I had spent a lot of time thinking about race and racism, but in this class, I have learned a lot about the other vectors of difference (age, religion, ability, etc.), their histories, and the way communication constructs and deconstructs these identities. We try to lead this class with humility, treating it as a learning experience for the students and ourselves." All the COMM 1020 instructors meet three times per semester in a Community of Practice (CoP) to talk about the class and to shape new assignments. Another important function of the CoP is to support one another while teaching material that can be weighty and complicated.

*"Before class one day, a student asked if we were going to talk about Israel/Palestine and Hamas. I felt we should, but I was also rather hesitant to do so with the headlines regarding teachers getting into trouble for such discussions. On the way to class, it dawned on me: 'don't talk ... LISTEN.'"*

*– Instructor Jean Farrell*

*"Still, the work of the anti-racist subcommittee at the campus level and a couple of influential voices in our department (particularly that of Dr. Rebecca deSouza) kept calling for us to both teach using a more systemic approach and practice what we teach by making systemic changes in our department."*

*– Dr. Ryan Goei*

*"After taking this class, I think more about what I say before I say it, and though it may be seen as cliché, I learned to never judge a book by its cover."*

*– June Weber, Communication '26*

Faculty in the Department of Communication have been grappling with how to help students "healthfully and productively engage across differences for over 30 years. Much of that work was focused at the individual level, helping students think about their communication style, build relationships with diverse others, or become aware of their implicit or explicit biases, for example. These are very useful endeavors," said Goei.

"Still, the work of the anti-racist subcommittee at the campus level and a couple of influential voices in our department (particularly that of former UMD professor Dr. Rebecca deSouza) kept calling for us to both teach using a more systemic approach and practice what we teach by making systemic changes in our department.

"We want to empower students with the knowledge necessary to engage meaningfully and positively in challenging conversations around gender, sexuality, ability, religion, race,

and age. Effective communication requires a systemic lens that helps students see how these issues are individual, of course, but also how they have been historically constructed by socio-cultural, institutional, and structural forces. We want students to see how communication is central to these projects as it both constructs (and deconstructs) these differences."

For students considering taking the class, Weber asserted, "Absolutely take it! It is a fantastic class that covers important issues in today's world, and it's incredibly interesting. The class challenged my mind in ways that no other class has. It made me wonder what I can do to be a better peer and person in general. After taking this class, I think more about what I say before I say it, and though it may be seen as cliché, I learned to never judge a book by its cover."

At this early stage, it seems there is much to be optimistic about for the new course, and the conversation is far from over.



Early fall on UMD campus as work continued on A.B. Anderson Hall.

# PUTTING CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITIES TO WORK FOR YOU AND CAHSS

When considering a gift to CAHSS, a Charitable Gift Annuity offers a unique and impactful way for you to contribute to UMD while also securing stable income for yourself (or a loved one) during your lifetime. A Charitable Gift Annuity allows you to make a charitable gift to support the mission of UMD and CAHSS, and in return, you will receive fixed payments for the rest of your life. This philanthropic tool offers you the opportunity to create a legacy that reflects your dedication to UMD. Charitable Gift Annuity rates went up on January 1, 2024, making now a particularly attractive time to explore this giving option.

### How It Works

- You make a gift of cash or publicly traded securities.
- The U of M Foundation pays you, or others you select, a fixed amount annually for life.
- The remaining assets support the campus, college, or program of your choice.

The minimum amount to fund a gift annuity at the U of M is \$10,000, and the annuitants must be age 55 or older when payments begin. Payout rates typically increase with age.

Sample gift annuity rates* payments begin immediately				
Age	65	70	75	80
Rate	5.7%	6.3%	7.0%	8.1%

\* American Council on Gift Annuities suggested rates as of January 1, 2024 for a one-life gift annuity (two-life rates will be lower)

### Deferred Income Option

If you want an immediate tax deduction, but do not need income now, you may prefer a deferred payment gift annuity. With this option, you make the gift now but select a date in the future for payments to begin. Because payments are deferred, the rate will be higher than for an immediate payment gift annuity. Many donors choose this option as a way to supplement future retirement income.

For more information about Charitable Gift Annuities, or to request a personalized illustration, contact the U of M Foundation at [plgiving@umn.edu](mailto:plgiving@umn.edu) or 612-625-8676, or Bryce Nixon, Director of Development, College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences at [bnixon@d.umn.edu](mailto:bnixon@d.umn.edu) or 218-726-6708.

Sample gift annuity rates* for a 55 year old with payments deferred to:				
Age	60	65	70	75
Rate	6.5%	9.1%	12.6%	17.7%

\* American Council on Gift Annuities suggested rates as of January 1, 2024

**Bryce Nixon**  
CAHSS Director of Development





*Aerial view of Woodland Avenue (left) and East 8th Street (right) near UMD's campus.*

## **MATCHING VALUES WITH MISSION AND VISION: New College-wide Internship Scholarship is Established**

Thanks to a generous endowment, the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences is developing its first college-wide internship scholarship. As a college-wide scholarship, the CAHSS Internship Scholarship celebrates the importance of internships to every department in CAHSS and the interdisciplinary nature of a CAHSS education, regardless of major.

The goal of the scholarship is to promote high-impact experiential learning and make it more accessible to students, given over 50% of CAHSS internships are currently underpaid or unpaid. The opportunity for students to explore fields they're interested in via internships is invaluable as it can reinforce their career plans or reroute them to a better fit. Internships also encourage students to apply abstract concepts they're learning on campus, use the skills they're developing in their liberal arts degree, and demonstrate their value to potential employers.

The scholarship will also help connect students with community members. It will remove barriers by helping the community understand what skills and knowledge students have to offer and enabling CAHSS students to confidently answer what they're going to do with their liberal arts degree.

The exact amount for the scholarship and the number of scholarships available will vary based on number of applicants and available fund dollars, but leadership expects \$500 to \$1000 will be available to students based on demand. The scholarship will be offered on a rolling-basis, both in timing and amount.

CAHSS Director of Development Bryce Nixon has emphasized that the college plans to work toward increasing both the monetary amount offered and the number of scholarships available. According to Dean Jeremy Youde, that goal is attributable to the scholarship fund's value as a retention tool given all the benefits it will offer students.

Students will be able to apply for the first round of scholarships at the end of spring semester 2024. Students will need to have an internship lined up in order to apply for the scholarship. Application information will be publicized to students through email and CAHSS social media, and will also be available through internship coordinators in all CAHSS academic departments. The application will be a simple Google Document designed to collect necessary information while minimizing the burden on students. If students have questions about applying, they should contact the internship coordinator in their major department or the CAHSS Dean's Office.

The idea for the scholarship originated from a college-wide conversation with faculty. Faculty were unified in desiring funding to supplement underpaid and unpaid internships which in turn enhance student learning on campus. Nixon was able to match a donor's values with the mission and vision of CAHSS to lay the foundation for the scholarship.

The scholarship is endowed by a UMD alum who asked for their name not to be attached to the scholarship. When asked what inspired them to fund the scholarship, the donor explained, "Through my work, over the years I have met a number of interns working in roles from the Midwest to the East Coast and West Coast, sometimes in very expensive urban areas. Whenever we get a chance to discuss how they've made ends meet, their stories are often heroic and sometimes horrific. The sacrifices they make for their internship are astonishing.

"These encounters made me remember my time as a student, how my family and I struggled simply to cover my tuition, books, and housing. An internship—at least an unpaid or low-paying internship—was not an option for students like me.

"After some conversations with UMD's Development Office, I slowly realized that there was a way to soften the impact of economics and finances on internships. I got excited, to think students like me could take on a challenging, rewarding, perhaps life-changing internship without having to worry as much about basic expenses. My goal for the new CAHSS Internship Scholarship is for it to mitigate this sort of dollars-versus-education type of decision-making."

Dean Youde is also excited about the potential for this scholarship, noting that in conversations, "Its premise makes sense to faculty, students, and donors."

Indeed, the original donor affirmed: "I like to think of the myriad paths students could take, given the opportunity of an internship, whether it's in a massive office tower, a wildlife sanctuary, a far-off city, or closer to home. It has tremendous potential for building confidence, opening one's eyes to how the world functions, and introducing the intern to new people and ways of life. Anyone who donates to the internship fund will be a part of that endless network of learning, adventures, and memories."

**Potential donors interested in contributing to the scholarship fund should contact Director of Development Bryce Nixon at [bnixon@d.umn.edu](mailto:bnixon@d.umn.edu) or 218-726-6708.**



Student map created in GIS 2552.

## MEMORY AND PLACE: A Mapping Assignment Develops Associations

What value is there in hand-sketching a map of one's childhood neighborhood from memory? In GIS 2552: Mapping Our World, Dr. Joseph J. Kerski (Geography) uses the assignment to build community in the classroom, foster discussion about map fundamentals, and "anchor the concept that humans are fundamentally tied to space and place—that place is part of what makes us human; that memories are linked to maps, and that these maps are in our brains as detailed large-scale maps."

Kerski explained that, "Mapping Our World invites students to investigate key 21st Century issues in their communities,

region, state, country, and the globe using spatial thinking and exciting, interactive maps to empower them to be critical and spatial thinkers regarding issues such as natural hazards, equity, population change, water, energy, supply chain management, human health, and others, and through understanding, give them tools to take action and to use them in their future careers."

When students are asked to sketch from memory their childhood neighborhood, they may use pencil, pen, colored pencils, or whatever manual tactile methods they would like to utilize. The students think about what they wondered about as

children or teenagers, what they dreamed about as they walked to the library or to school, or what they played in this backyard or on that street.

"The detail of the students' memory, like for all of us, is remarkable," Kerski stated. "The maps are finely illustrated, and it makes for great discussion about mapping, place, space, scale, change over space and time, and memory." The class also considers what is important to include and to leave out, as well as what symbols they chose.

A former student in the course and current TA of the course, Devin Rhodes (Environment, Sustainability, and Geography & Geographic Information Science '24), reflected, "A key takeaway from this assignment was the beginning of thinking spatially and learning to visualize geographic locations in a 3D realm/perspective. I realized the difficulty of remembering the placement of different locations with respect to neighboring locations (I also realized how bad the urban planning was.) The

absolute biggest takeaway I found was visualizing the placement of your living in the town in relationship to different areas of the town."

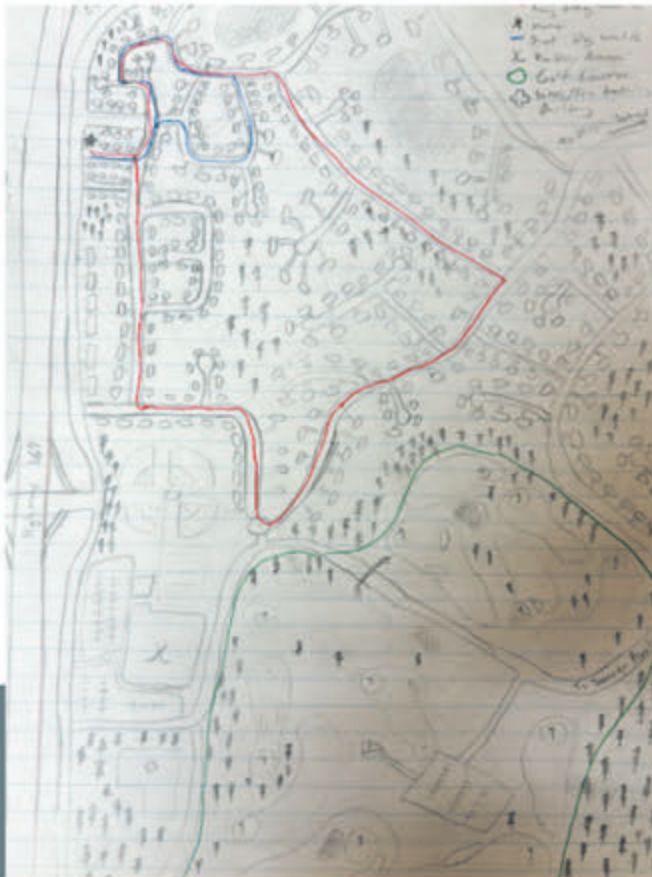
Once students have completed their map, they take a picture of their results and post them for others to comment on. Students then reflect on how their map was similar or different from the map of a classmate. Kerski noted that "Many students get so engaged in this activity that they start looking at and reflecting on other maps as well."

Kerski reflected, "The high level of student engagement is always wonderful to see. [The assignment has] affirmed my belief that a personal experience with mapping and with place and space is a part of every human's experience. It has also helped me re-recognize the diversity of childhood places and experiences. Some experiences may not have been positive, such as the mean dog down the street or poison ivy we may have gotten from that field, or the time we fell off the bicycle here or there, but they are all a part of our experiences and all a part of place."

Rhodes similarly asserted, "Mapping Our World is a severely underrated course in my opinion. It was actually the course that sparked my interest in a GIS minor, which I eventually changed to a major.

"The course has to be the definition of wonder. You wonder how to recreate your hometown, different web applications, how a guy was able to simulate a traffic jam on Google Maps, and the range that you can create a map to better understand geography or different statistics/scenarios. You also wonder why people create bad maps intentionally, which then leads to wondering how you can make it better.

"I sincerely value this course and use different aspects of it in my daily life and in conversation with family or friends to help them think spatially too. I couldn't be happier to close my undergrad experience by working as a TA in this course. I believe that says something."



Student map created in GIS 2552.

# HOW TO FLY: Students Lead a Motion Capture Project Driven by Curiosity

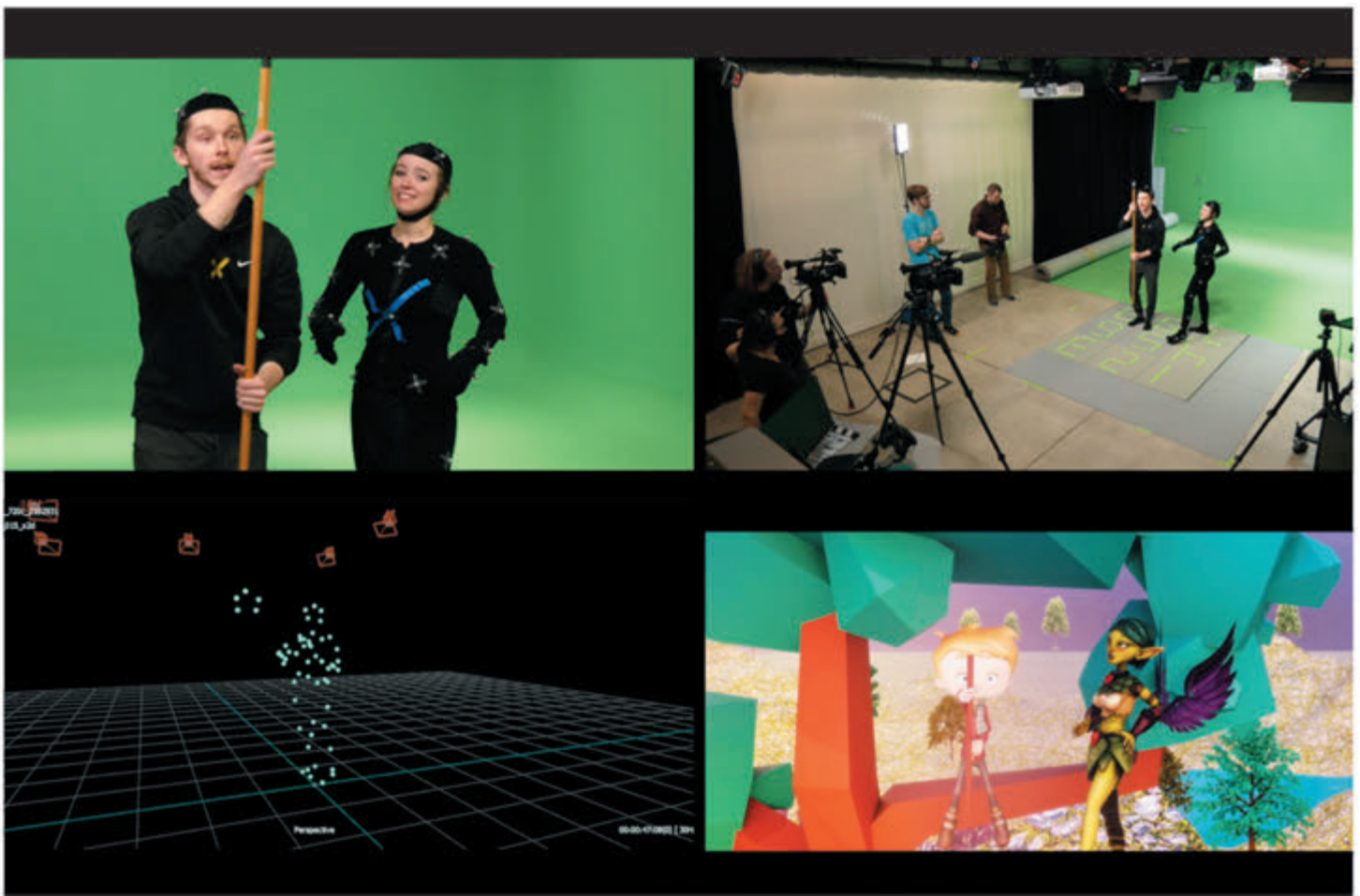
In Fall 2022, students and staff in the MMAD Lab (Motion + Media Across Disciplines) needed to gain some traction after the pandemic stalled activity. The question of how to fly provided the desired spark to reignite their creativity.

“We wondered what we could do and then step by step pursued that wonder to learn and bring what we imagined into reality. All the motions and beats that the actors performed were how they imagined they would fly,” explained MMAD Lab student worker Ethan Schurman (Narrative Digital Arts '24). “Then, on the team’s side, it was a wonder in how our technology works, the pipeline in taking motion tracking data and turning it into a

narrative 3D animation, and how we can show the world a hint of what goes into these films and what the lab can do.”

The MMAD Lab and Viz Lab at UMD are creative “sandboxes” for all students and professors on campus to collaborate together with emerging technology, including experimental art, music, biology, physics, and computer science.

Director Lisa Fitzpatrick elaborated, “We wanted to create a fun project to help the students learn the motion capture system and animation. During the pandemic, we did not use the motion capture and animation systems, and so we were rusty at



Greenscreen production views (top), Blade motion capture screen view (bottom left), and final animation screen view (bottom right).



creating with motion capture. The MMAD Lab group just set out wondering and exploring with curiosity how to learn and share about motion capture. We decided to make a synchronized split screen video showing the process of motion capture animation; displaying 3 camera angles, Blade motion capture, greenscreen technology, and the completed animation."

Ultimately, the project aimed "to capture the motion and improvisational dialogue of UMD Theatre students, Thessa Schultz and Jake Lieder, who were thrilled to do the improv for 'How to Fly' and just play around in the motion capture space, as were the MMAD Lab student assistants," Lisa said.

MMAD Lab student workers Brendan Rood (Computer Science and German Studies '25), Haeun Lee (Digital Arts '24), and Schurman, as well as Lisa Fitzpatrick and video producer Dan Fitzpatrick, shot the video over three hours on February 28, 2023, but they didn't finish editing, creating animation, and putting everything together until September 2023. Lisa explained, "We were a little surprised with how long it took just to learn everything, but we created everything in the MMAD Lab, using Vicon Motion Capture hardware and Blade software, as well as Final Cut Pro video editing software, and Blender rigging and animation software."

Schurman reflected, "As someone who has tackled most learning/projects by myself, it was really cool to work as a team. Being able to trust my coworker with the motion tracking data and then Dan with the video edits allowed me to pour the necessary long hours into the 3D model character rigging and the post production work of 3D animation and modeling. A person can achieve a lot by themselves, but it is otherworldly what people can achieve as a team."

Collaboration also offered the opportunity to learn effective communication skills. Schurman explained, "An unexpected challenge was coordinating visions. I ended up being the director of the project, and I did not initially realize I needed to find ways to communicate the idea and plan we all had so we were unified in expectations. Through storyboards and different ways to explain a scene, I helped convey the plan/story we were making in a way that everyone understood in their respective roles."

Ultimately, it seems everyone's goal in the MMAD Lab is to have fun and create a good product: "The MMAD Lab is the coolest place on campus," asserted Schurman. "Anyone should know the lab and see it because you never know the connections/possibilities that can happen through the lab."

### ***Interested in viewing the MMAD Lab's work on "How to Fly"?***



#### **Behind the Scenes Video**

<https://zumn.edu/HowToFly-BTS>



#### **Animation Video**

<https://zumn.edu/HowToFly>



#### **UMD PR Video: Finding creative applications for computer science at UMD**

<https://zumn.edu/CS-at-UMD>



*Greenscreen production view vs. completed animation screen view.*

# CAHSS NOTES

Share your news here—recent research, publications, events, achievements, and/or accolades. Email your announcements to [newsedit@d.umn.edu](mailto:newsedit@d.umn.edu).

**Alumna Hannah Alley** (Communication '10) self-published a poetry collection: *Sun-Soaked Shadows*.



**Dr. Jennifer Brady** (World Languages and Cultures) served as guest editor of a special feature published in *Hispania* in 2023 titled, "Public Humanities in Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Contexts."

**Dr. Jill Doerfler** (American Indian Studies) co-edited a special issue of *American Periodicals: A Journal of History & Criticism* on Indigenous Periodicals. She also co-authored the introduction, "You Could Speak the Truth with a Tongue of Fire: The Cultural and Political Work of Indigenous Periodicals."

**Undergraduates Mackenzie Ehrenberg, Ripley Erickson, Madeline Fife, Maya Gort, Auda Ilvedson, Bosco Jacobson, Emily Markgraf, Jennette Schmitt, Emily Spaniol, Maryann Stafford, Suzy Wuertz, and Paige Wussow** each had art selected by artist, guest curator, and alumna **Susanna Gaunt** (Painting, Drawing and Printmaking '17) for display in the Duluth Art Institute's 2024 UMD Emerging Photographers online show. The Duluth Art Institute and the UMD Art & Design Photography area have collaborated on this exhibition annually since 2007.

**Dr. Kathryn Haglin** (Political Science) published "They're Coming for You! How Perceptions of Automation Affect Public Support for Universal Basic Income" in *Social Science Computer Review* and "The Personality and Politics of Cryptocurrency Investors" in *American Politics Research*. Both papers are co-authored with Dr. Soren Jordan (Auburn) and Dr. Grant Ferguson (TCU).



**Dr. Lisa Horton** (English, Linguistics, and Writing Studies [ELWS]), **Dr. Jason Ford** (Philosophy), and **Dr. David Beard** (ELWS) (with Clare Ford, Aaron Propes, and Peter Soulen) published an essay "From Television to Videotape and Back Again: Intellectual Property Laws in the TSU of *Doctor Who*" in the collection *Televisual Shared Universes* (Lexington Books).

**Alumnus Trevor Klueg** (Graphic Design '96), animator for *Teen Titans Go!* at Warner Bros., had his illustration, "Together we can reach New Heights!" included in the Animation Guild's (Local 839) 2024 calendar.



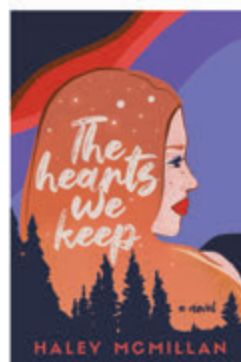
**Alumna Christina Labey** (Studio Art '07) was interviewed as a bookmaking expert for the article "How to Produce a Photobook" in *Aperture*.



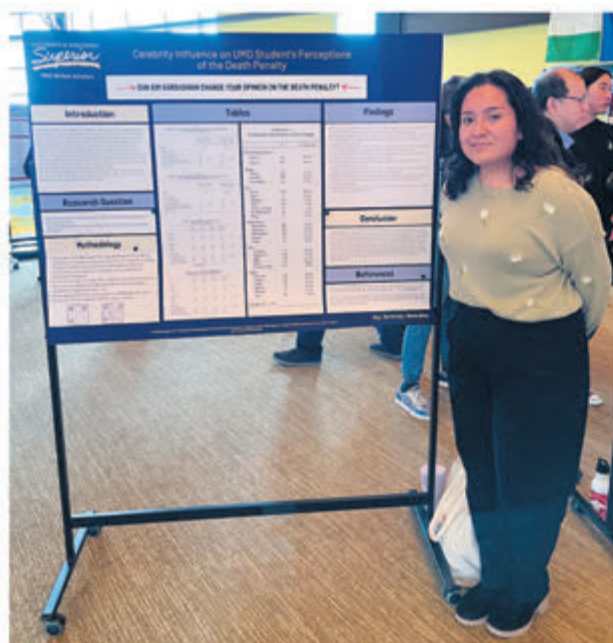
**Alumnus Chance Lasher** (Writing Studies '23); Zomi Bloom, MBA; and (ELWS) **Dr. David Beard's** article "Improving Rural Mental Health Care: Upstream and Downstream Solutions" appeared in *Minnesota Physician*.

**Professor emerita Linda LeGarde Grover** (American Indian Studies) published *A Song over Miskwaa Rapids* (University of Minnesota Press).

**Alumna Haley McMillan** (Communication and Spanish '11) self-published two novels: *The Hearts We Keep* and *Margot James is Fine*.



**Undergraduate Britney Mendez** (Criminology '24), was a member of the 2023 cohort of McNair Scholars. She presented her research project "Celebrity Influence on UMD Students' Perception of the Death Penalty" on October 12, 2023 at the Undergraduate Research Program held at UW-Superior and at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research (April 8-10, 2024) in Long Beach, CA. Her primary mentor was **Dr. Scott Vollum** (Criminology & Sociology); **Dr. Janelle Wilson** (Sociology) served as co-mentor.



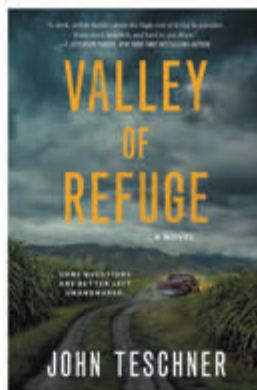
**Master of Professional Studies (MPS) student Mary Orman's** MPS project, a perinatal loss resource guide, was published in print and online by St. Luke's Hospital. She is completing the MPS under the state's over-65 tuition structure, which is \$10/credit. Her project was overseen by **Dr. Mitra Emad** (Medical Anthropology) with **Dr. David Beard** (ELWS).

Visiting Fulbright Professor with the Department of Studies in Justice, Culture, and Social Change (2010 and 2020), Dr. Eszter Siposné Nándori (University of Miskolc, Hungary) has published with **Dr. Tim Roufs** (Anthropology) "The Effect of Economic Conditions on Poverty Perception in Minnesota" in *SN Social Sciences*.

**Dr. Justin Rubin** (Music) and **Dr. Brett Linski** (Music) recorded a song cycle in Weber Music Hall with Alice Pierce, John Pierce, and Diana Shapiro (all former UMD faculty). The song cycle, *Visions and Memories*, was composed by Dr. Rubin and based on six poems Dr. Linski wrote.

Undergraduate **Addison Severs** (Studio Art '25) helped design the 2023 Haunted Ship.

**Dr. Sara Sowers-Wills** (ELWS) received the 2023 CAHSS Award for Research and Creative Activity.



Assistant Professor **John Teschner** (ELWS) published his second novel, *Valley of Refuge* (Forge Books).

**Dr. Maureen Tobin Stanley** and **Dr. Jennifer Brady** (both of World Languages and Cultures) published an article in *Hispanic Studies Review* on a recent novel by Najat El Hachmi.

**Department of Theatre alumni** from the past 50 years celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the Marshall Performing Arts Center on Saturday, April 13, 2024. 800+ theatre majors have graduated from UMD since the department was established in 1974.

**Dr. Janelle L. Wilson** (Sociology) co-published two articles with **Dr. Carmen M. Latterell** (Mathematics): "Flipped Classrooms, Mathematics Identity, and Preservice Elementary Teachers" in *MathAMATYC Educator* and "Not Asking for Help/Feeling Dumb: Preservice Elementary Teachers Reflect on Math Classes" in *European Journal of Mathematics and Science Education*. Dr. Wilson also co-published "Nostalgia and the Corona Pandemic: A Tranquil Feeling in a Fearful World" with Dr. Michael Hviid Jacobsen (Aalborg University, Denmark) and Dr. Krystine I. Batcho (LeMoyne College, Syracuse, NY) in *The Emerald Handbook of the Sociology of Emotions for a Post-Pandemic World: Imagined Emotions and Emotional Futures*. Additionally, Dr. Wilson's article, "From Distress to De-Stress: Key Stressors and Coping Strategies for College Students," appeared in *Psychology Today*.

**Dr. Elizabethada Wright** (ELWS) and **Dr. David Beard** (ELWS) published *A Charge for Change* (Parlor Press), an anthology demonstrating the powerful futures of rhetorical studies.



# UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA DULUTH

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*Historic image of Marshall Performing Arts Center*

