A single remark can change a person’s direction in life. Tammy Goss’ life headed down a new path after Dr. B. Jill Smith, a senior lecturer in geography and anthropology, mentioned the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs and the opportunity students have to do research with faculty at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.

“She was talking about her own research and how ORSP made it possible for students to work with faculty on projects, and it captured my interest,” Goss said.

Smith recommended Goss connect with Dr. Larry Martin, who was director of American Indian studies at that time. American Indian studies was Goss’ major. As a result, Martin and Goss began the first of three research projects on endangered Native American languages and how to revitalize and preserve those languages. The research led Goss to become a McNair Scholar. The McNair program benefits selected juniors and seniors who plan to enter graduate school to pursue doctorates. Later she followed her research interest of saving Native American languages in a graduate study program at UW-Madison.

Goss’ experience is common. Each year more than 800 UW-Eau Claire students strengthen their education by taking part in a research, scholarly, or creative activity with faculty who provide guidance and direction.

“Faculty-student interaction leads to a deeper understanding of the subject and to student growth and development,” said UW-Eau Claire Chancellor Brian Levin-Stankevich. “Such collaboration has long been a hallmark of a UW-Eau Claire education that is only now becoming more common.”

Since the mid 1960s, UW-Eau Claire faculty have done research with students. In 1988 in recognition of the level of undergraduate scholarship already present on the campus, the UW System Board of Regents established the Center of Excellence for Faculty and Undergraduate Student Research Collaboration at UW-Eau Claire.

“The Center designation helped UW-Eau Claire become a leader in the movement to incorporate collaborative research into undergraduate programs,” said Dr. Karen Havholm, assistant vice chancellor for research and sponsored programs.

When faculty reach out to students like Goss through scholarly partnerships, they provide a richer undergraduate experience and broaden students’ thinking about further education and career choices. The following stories illustrate the profound impact of faculty mentoring on students with examples from 1985 to the present.

Nothing promotes hands-on, real-world understanding more than faculty-student interaction.

Chancellor
Brian Levin-Stankevich

Déjà vu: collaboration continues 25 years later

Dr. Susan Kelly, a mathematics professor at UW-La Crosse, might be feeling some déjà vu as she collaborates with Dr. James Walker, a UW-Eau Claire mathematics professor.

When she was a UW-Eau Claire undergraduate student 25 years ago, Kelly collaborated on research with Walker and Dr. Fred King, a UW-Eau Claire chemistry professor.

Kelly also took classes from Walker, who shared with his students the experience of writing his first book and encouraged students to offer their input, she said.

“He treated us like colleagues as much as students,” Kelly said of Walker.

“I was lucky to be working with several very gifted students, including Sue Kelly, Ken Dykema and Doug Pearson,” Walker said.

“One of the reasons I was able to write my first book on Fourier analysis, a beginning graduate-level text that is still in print, was because of the interaction with those students.”

Walker said he had no idea he’d be working with Kelly again 25 years later.

“Sue Kelly and I have collaborated on a paper on wavelet theory together and intend to continue this work,” Walker said. “She is a very accomplished water colorist and also is working on applying wavelets to studying the problem of classifying different styles of painting. Sue is analyzing paintings as images by detecting various types of brushstrokes at different size scales and, in general, by analyzing the edges in the image at multiple sizes and resolutions.”

Kelly, who earned bachelor’s degrees in physics and mathematics from UW-Eau Claire in 1985, worked with King her senior year. Her undergraduate research work with King appeared in a published paper with another of King’s research students.
“Dr. King gave students independence and encouraged creative approaches to research problems,” Kelly said. “That experience taught me that you can have an expectation in mind but that results of your work may be surprising.”

Collaborative research is important for students in many ways, King said.

“For the student, it’s taking what you have learned in the classroom setting and trying to figure out how it can be used to approach the solution of an unsolved problem,” King said. “It’s about learning how to think creatively and how to deal with failure. It’s about the great joy of discovering something new, and it’s about growing as a person.”

Kelly attended Washington University in St. Louis, where she received a master’s degree in 1988 and a doctorate in 1992. Kelly joined the faculty at UW-La Crosse in 1992 and continues the tradition she first experienced at UW-Eau Claire by doing research with undergraduates.

“When I work with students, I remember my experiences with Jim Walker and Fred King and try and live up to their example,” Kelly said.

Research sets student apart from the competition

It wasn’t until Woubeshet Ayenew, an international student from Ethiopia, entered medical school that he fully realized the value of his undergraduate research experiences at UW-Eau Claire.

“I started looking back and realized how lucky I was to get to work with a research team leader, my professor, instead of a graduate student,” said Ayenew, a 1992 UW-Eau Claire graduate who worked with Dr. Scott Hartsel, a UW-Eau Claire chemistry professor. “I was able to be at the cutting edge of research. It was a unique setup and opportunity.”

Doing undergraduate research on Amphotericin B, an antifungal drug used primarily for treatment of patients with progressive and potentially life-threatening fungal infections, also gave Ayenew an appreciation for the intricacies of science.

“With the stopped-flow spectrometer I used in Dr. Hartsel’s lab I was measuring a reaction that took a fraction of a second,” said Ayenew, whose research was aimed at finding ways to make Amphotericin B less toxic. “That work really opened my eyes to the vastness of science. It made me realize I had only barely scratched the surface of what there was to know. It was humbling.”

Working in Hartsel’s laboratory with other students also encouraged Ayenew to do his best work.

“The students in the lab were all strong students, and we would feed off of each other’s hard work,” Ayenew said. “There was also the intangible benefit of belonging to a sort of family in the lab that was important for me, being 1,000 miles away from my own family.”

Ayenew said the undergraduate research
helped set him apart from other students when he applied to medical school at the University of Minnesota. The advantage was particularly important since the medical school gives preference to University of Minnesota students with state residency status, Ayenew said, noting he also was not a U.S. citizen when he applied.

“While I can’t say it got me into medical school, it really did help me to stand out,” Ayenew said. “I had done research, presentations at professional meetings and published papers already. That becomes something that distinguishes you from others.”

Ayenew was a remarkable student in the lab as well as the classroom, Hartsel said.

“He was a co-author on a widely read review article on the antifungal drug Amphotericin B,” Hartsel said. “I am sure this accomplishment helped him get into the extremely competitive medical school program at the University of Minnesota.”

Ayenew said his experience in laboratory research also gave him confidence when he began working in a renal physiology lab during medical school.

“It was totally different research than I had done, but I felt comfortable working in the lab,” Ayenew said. “Because of my undergraduate experience, I was familiar with how a lab operates, and I had a certain level of comfort, knowing I could do research. I’d been there and done that.”

Ayenew said working in the renal physiology research lab was extremely important to him for many reasons, one of which was that it allowed him to pay state residency tuition.

“That was critical for me,” he said. “Without that benefit, I would not have been able to afford to go to medical school.”

Ayenew completed medical school at the University of Minnesota and did his internal medicine residency at Hennepin County Medical Center. He completed four years of fellowship in cardiology at the University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics in Madison and has been a staff cardiologist for the past five years at Hennepin Heart Center in Minneapolis.
As a nontraditional student, Terri Hogue already was busy juggling the demands of being a college student, wife and mother of a young son when she took on yet another challenging but rewarding role: that of student researcher. After her family relocated to Eau Claire, and after having worked in the medical field for 10 years, she returned to school to explore alternative career paths and future opportunities in the earth sciences.

Once she enrolled in a physical geology course, Hogue was hooked on pursuing geology as a major. During her later years as a geology major, Hogue worked with Dr. John Tinker, now a professor emeritus of geology, on research at a contaminated St. Croix County commercial site where some of the contaminated plumes had migrated toward a subdivision. As an undergraduate student researcher, Hogue used computer modeling to describe groundwater flow and the potential contamination of local drinking water wells.

Hogue said the research opportunity opened doors that have helped her achieve academic and professional success. “The research with Dr. Tinker and the letters of recommendation from professors in the department really solidified my opportunity not only to get into graduate school, but also to receive a National Science
Foundation Fellowship to fund it,” she said. “Without that funding, I would never have been able to afford graduate school.”

Hogue — who completed the project with Tinker just before her 1995 graduation — gave a poster presentation of the results at UW-Eau Claire’s Student Research Day in April 1995 and at the Geological Society of America’s national conference for professional geologists in November 1995.

“Terri was able to interact with many professionals at the GSA conference, showing them she could complete a project that was as demanding as a master’s-level project,” Tinker said.

Hogue earned her master’s degree in 1998 and her doctorate in hydrology and water resources engineering from The University of Arizona in 2003.

She is currently an associate professor in the department of civil and environmental engineering at the University of California, Los Angeles, and teaches classes in hydrology and water resources engineering. This past spring, Hogue was the recipient of a prestigious NSF CAREER award for early career scientists. She also returned to UW-Eau Claire to be a judge for Student Research Day in 2009.

Hogue has collaborated on research with doctoral and master’s degree students as well as more than 25 undergraduate students, completing the circle from student researcher to faculty mentor.

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Perhaps you remember the first Apple Computer commercial that ran during the 1984 Super Bowl.

A woman in bright red shorts carrying a sledgehammer is running through a crowd of people all dressed in gray prisoner-type clothes shuffling along into a movie theater where a man on a movie screen drones on and on. The woman, who is being pursued by uniformed armed guards, stops and swings the hammer like a shot put and throws it at the screen. The screen is obliterated, the people look stunned and a voice-over says “On January 24 Apple Computer introduces Macintosh, and you’ll see why 1984 won’t be like ’1984.’”

This was one of hundreds of Super Bowl ads that undergraduate Lori Christians Herzog watched as part of a summer research project with Dr. Chuck Tomkovick, a UW-Eau Claire professor of management and marketing. In all she viewed three decades of Super Bowl commercials. The Apple commercial is one she still remembers nearly a decade later.

“I spent whole days watching the ads and analyzing them,” said Herzog, who is a marketing researcher for MarketTools Inc. in St. Louis Park, Minn. “I would record when they aired, where the ad was positioned, whether celebrities or cartoon characters were used, the ad metrics and the investment of the ad, among other things.”

Determining what made Super Bowl ads successful was a project that Tomkovick had wanted to research for years. The Super Bowl is viewed by nearly 140 million Americans and 1 billion viewers worldwide. Using the Super Bowl to debut new, creative and expensive commercials now is a tradition, said Tomkovick, who with Dr. Rama Yelkur, an associate professor of management and marketing at UW-Eau Claire completed the first Super Bowl advertising effectiveness study of its kind.

Herzog published three papers with Tomkovick and Yelkur, including one in the Journal of Marketing Communications.

“It’s a prestigious European journal and has been frequently cited since,” Tomkovick said.

Additionally, Herzog won a first-place award at Student Research Day in 2000 with her poster on Super Bowl advertising.

“This was after working hard on another poster in 1999 and commenting, ‘Next year we are going to win.’ She was determined to do so,” Tomkovick said.
As a result of the research, Herzog was able to attend two national conferences, one in New York and one in Montana. Funding she received from the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs helped make this possible.

The experience was a powerful motivator, Herzog said.

“It’s the main reason I am in marketing research today,” she said.

“...The research was unique. It was on the cutting edge. It stood out and was something people could relate to whether they were business people or not.

Lori Christians Herzog
Learning to negotiate social situations is tough for most middle-school children, but having a disability compounds the problem, said Lisa Hansen Johnson, who is visually impaired.

“I know it’s hard to fit in because I experienced it,” Johnson said.

Johnson is interested in the social difficulties disabled children and adults face. She believes the problems evolve in stages as a child grows up.

“Disabled people often feel they are just like everyone else when they are in the early grades in school. Then by fifth grade they start to realize they are not the same,” Johnson said. “Socially they become aware they are not welcome in the social cliques that are forming. By high school, they are very aware of the social differences.”

Looking at social development of people with disabilities is now the basis of Johnson’s doctoral dissertation, but her research into this problem started during her senior year in college. Johnson took a required education class with Dr. Katherine Rhoades, a former professor of education who is now a professor and dean emerita and the interim coordinator of women’s studies at UW-Eau Claire.

As part of the class, the students were required to do a semesterlong research project and present it at a research exposition.

Johnson chose to study the social implications of being disabled. Around the state, she interviewed disabled adults, college students and children in various grades. She made an hourlong documentary showing disabled characters in social scenes from movies such as “Forrest Gump,” “The Hunchback of Notre
Dame” and “At First Sight,” interspersed with clips from the interviews with the adults, college students and children about their social experiences. In addition, Johnson had disabled high school students keep a journal where they recorded their emotions regarding social issues for one week. Her presentation included the documentary, a display of these journals and a 35-page research paper.

“Lisa did an extraordinary job on the project,” Rhoades said. “I think it was a life-changing experience for her.”

Johnson also did research with Dr. Karen Havholm, a professor of geology.

“I was used to using slides of geological features to explain concepts — for example, a photo of a U-shaped valley to illustrate an effect of a glacier on the landscape,” Havholm said. When she encountered Johnson as a student in her class, she realized her methods of teaching didn’t work.

Havholm suggested she and Johnson research ways to present class material other than visually.

Johnson’s research had a major impact on Havholm’s approach to teaching.

“A major concept I learned through Lisa’s research was the idea of universal design for learning,” Havholm said. “This is the notion that you should design anything to accommodate as many people as possible, and in the process you actually help everyone. For example, a sighted novice learner in geology might look at the photo of a U-shaped valley and not notice the U shape that you, as the expert teacher, think is obvious. By using descriptive language when you show the slide, you accommodate the person with visual impairment, but at the same time any number of sighted learners in the classroom may also have a better learning experience.”

Johnson translated her research on universal design into a poster presentation, which earned her first place at UW-Eau Claire’s Student Research Day in 2002. She also presented the poster at the national conference of the Geological Society of America. From there, she was recruited to do a project for NASA, evaluating NASA educational materials to make the information accessible for all students.

Johnson went to the U.S. Space & Rocket Center museum, where she made suggestions and also evaluated learning materials. As part of her job, Johnson traveled to the Kennedy and Johnson space centers and was in mission control at the Marshall Space Flight Center during the 2003 Columbia space launch.

Johnson’s research also helped her to become one of the 20 students nationwide to be named to USA Today’s 2003 All-USA College Academic First Team. The award recognizes significant academic endeavors at the undergraduate level and is given annually by the USA Today newspaper. She was the first UW-Eau Claire student to receive the national honor.

The research and resulting opportunities to work for NASA prepared her for her later work on a master’s degree from UW-Eau Claire, which she received in 2006, and for her current doctoral work at the University of Minnesota.

“I am a better researcher and a better student because of those experiences,” Johnson said.
“Amazing” is what Dr. Scott Hartsel, a UW-Eau Claire professor of chemistry, calls Lori Scardino who as an undergraduate worked on collaborative research with him.

“Lori began to make both intellectual and experimental contributions to our research faster than any student I have ever seen,” Hartsel said. “Her enthusiasm and work ethic were contagious I think, pushing all of us to do more.”

Scardino also worked with UW-Eau Claire faculty members Dr. Julie Anderson in biology and Dr. Veena Chadha in mathematics and collaborated with Dr. Alan Dispirito, a professor from Iowa State University, before graduating from UW-Eau Claire in 2007 with bachelor’s degrees in chemistry and biology.

“Doing undergraduate research was absolutely the best part of my experience at UW-Eau Claire,” Scardino said. “I got to work with primary investigators doing research and not just be an undergraduate washing laboratory test tubes — something that wouldn’t have been the case at a lot of bigger schools.”

Her dedication to seeking out and performing research helped Scardino achieve numerous honors, including being a McNair Scholar, a Kell Scholar and one of two UW-Eau Claire students to be named to USA Today’s All-USA College Academic First Team. She did all this as a single mother raising two girls.

“At UW-Eau Claire, the whole environment was so supportive of students doing research,” Scardino said. “It was really incorporated into the whole education experience. We were able to bridge what we were doing in the lab to the class curriculum.”

Scardino also presented research done with Hartsel at four national meetings, at Student Research Day at UW-Eau Claire and in Madison at the UW System’s annual Posters in the Rotunda event, where she also was a keynote speaker and received a state legislative citation.

“Traveling to meetings gives you a better picture of what opportunities there are,” Scardino said. “I wouldn’t have thought about going to graduate school when I first started college. Going to meetings opened my eyes to
opportunities and opened so many doors for me.”

Research also educates students in many ways classes can’t, Scardino said.

“First, it helps you decide if research is right for you and something you really enjoy and want to do,” Scardino said. “It also teaches you the problem-solving skills you can’t get from a textbook.”

Scardino said the importance of undergraduate research was brought home to her when she served as a student representative for graduate school admissions at UW-Madison, where she currently is a doctoral student.

“The No. 1 thing we looked for was if the applicants had done research,” Scardino said. “It’s the best indicator of whether a person will do well in graduate school.”

Kell Container Corporation Scholarship

In 1998 brothers John, Mike and Tom Kell established the Kell Container Corporation Scholarship through the UW-Eau Claire Foundation, supporting a UW-Eau Claire junior or senior who demonstrates outstanding ability in undergraduate student-faculty collaborative research. The scholarship is supplemented with a student stipend, supplies and travel expenses through the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. In addition the faculty mentor receives a small summer stipend during the project period.

Since it was established, the scholarship has supported students studying in six different disciplines.

Scardino currently is doing research for her doctorate at UW-Madison, focusing on immunology research in the cellular and molecular pathology graduate program. Once she completes her doctoral degree, Scardino hopes to be a professor at a university.

“I’d love to return to UW-Eau Claire,” Scardino said. “But no matter what, I want to teach at a school that values undergraduate research like UW-Eau Claire. I’m excited about science, and I want to get the next generation excited, too.”

Developing the Necessary Tools

Michael Ojibway says he was accepted into the University of Missouri’s competitive social psychology graduate program because of the tools he developed while doing research as an undergraduate at UW-Eau Claire.

“Doing research and participating in the McNair program gave me the vocabulary and confidence to talk about research ideas and to apply them to writing proposals,” Ojibway said. “Doing research gives you the skills that propel you forward. I arrived at graduate school having more tools, more preparation, than many of the students in my cohort.”

Having those strong skills helped Ojibway win the prestigious Ford Foundation Predoctoral Diversity Fellowship from the National Academies. The annual national competition for approximately 60 three-year predoctoral fellowships is administered by the National Research Council on behalf of the Ford Foundation. The fellowship provides a $20,000 annual stipend, an award to the graduate institution in lieu of tuition and fees, and the opportunity to participate in three prestigious conferences of Ford Fellows.

The selection criteria include evidence of superior academic achievement and promise as a scholar and teacher, capacity to teach and respond to students of diverse backgrounds, and membership in an ethnic group traditionally underrepresented in the American professoriate.

Ojibway, a member of the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe, minored in American Indian studies, taking courses in the Ojibwe language and American Indian culture. He is a member of the Omicron Delta Kappa Leadership Honor Society and the Gold Caps Chapter of Mortar Board Honor Society, and he was president of UW-Eau Claire’s Native American Student Association.

As a McNair Scholar at UW-Eau Claire, Ojibway engaged in several faculty-student collaborative research projects, ranging from a documentary film — "Denver March: The Contemporary Pow Wow Explained" — with English faculty member Dr. Debra Barker to research for psychology faculty member Dr. Blaine Peden examining the ethical and socio-psychological implications of Indian mascots and logos in American mass media. In his senior year, he conducted a collaborative research project with psychology faculty member Dr. April Bleske-Rechek that involved examining both majority and minority students’ perceptions of educational mentoring with regard to racial and ethnic preferences, ideal mentoring characteristics and past mentoring experiences.

(continued on next page)
One finding of the research with Bleske-Rechek was that students of color who participated in the research showed no preference for mentors of the same race, ethnicity or gender. Rather the relationships built and the social networks formed determined the success of the mentoring relationship.

“The results challenged the assumption that for mentoring to work the mentor and students needed to be of the same race and gender,” Bleske-Rechek said. “It was an awakening for Michael and me too. I thought initially that I was only working with Michael because there wasn’t a person of his race that he could work with — that I was the fallback. But what Michael and I found was we developed a relationship based on mutual interest in the research and mutual respect. We discussed candidly his experience as a diverse student on campus, and I learned a lot. For one thing, I learned not to make assumptions about which students would want to work with me and gain from being involved in research with me.”

The research with Bleske-Rechek was an awakening experience for Ojibway as well.

“It gave me new eyes to look at low retention of students of color and what things need to change to improve that rate,” he said.

Ojibway said being a McNair Scholar and pursuing research definitely helped him succeed.

“When I came to UW-Eau Claire I didn’t have self-confidence,” Ojibway said. “I thought, ‘What am I doing here?’ But building those relationships with people like April helped me develop into a student other students — black, white, Latino, whatever — looked up to.”

Due to his increased self-confidence and ability to articulate information about his research, Ojibway was selected as one of a handful of students to present the results of his research on mentoring at Posters in the Rotunda in the state Capitol in 2007.

**Posters in the Rotunda**

UW-Eau Claire students present research projects to legislators, state leaders and UW System alumni and supporters during Posters in the Rotunda: A Celebration of Undergraduate Research, held each spring at the state Capitol in Madison.

UW-Eau Claire students and faculty mentors join researchers from other UW System schools to discuss their work and the value of undergraduate research. Posters in the Rotunda receives funding from the UW System.
Having students use toilet paper to turn themselves into mummies is just one of the creative ways James Hahn taught a class at I.E.S. San Juan Bautista, a secondary school in Madrid, Spain. Hahn, a 2007 UW-Eau Claire graduate and a 2008-09 Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship recipient, used the Halloween holiday to teach the Spanish students something about American culture while also teaching them English.

“I primarily designed and implemented conversation lessons,” said Hahn, who taught the Spanish equivalent of seventh- to 12th-grade students enrolled in a bilingual program. “I engaged students in a wide range of speaking activities — from role-playing activities to debates — that allowed them to focus on grammar or vocabulary development.”

Hahn also had to do a research project as part of the Fulbright Teaching Assistantship. This was not the first time Hahn had done research. Hahn was a Blugold Fellowship recipient at UW-Eau Claire his freshman and sophomore years. As part of the fellowship, he was paired with Dr. Erica Benson, an associate professor of English. He did research with her on folk linguistic attitudes — specifically the beliefs that nonlinguists hold about dialects and language change. He worked with Benson his freshman year and most of his sophomore year looking at Midwest dialect perceptions. He also spent the final semester of his sophomore year studying abroad in Valladolid, Spain, where the UW-Eau Claire Center for International Studies helped him continue linguistic research, looking at Spanish dialect perceptions.

“Jim conducted fieldwork with more than 35 research participants in two countries and languages,” Benson said. “Jim’s openness to feedback, good judgment, self-discipline, assertiveness and positive attitude made him not only a successful student researcher but also an equal collaborator on graduate-level research projects.”

Hahn gave an oral presentation on his research with Benson at UW-Eau Claire’s English Festival and at the Midwest American Dialect Society meeting, a regional professional conference, where Hahn was the only undergraduate student presenter. In addition, he gave a poster presentation at UW-Eau Claire’s Student Research Day in 2006.

For his Fulbright project, Hahn, who holds a dual degree from UW-Eau Claire in mathematics and Spanish, looked at the presence or absence of multiple intelligences in the Spanish mathematics classroom and how it affects students’ attitudes.

“The academic knowledge, confidence and cultural understanding gained from my research will benefit me in my postgraduate schooling and future careers,” Hahn said.

Hahn plans to continue teaching mathematics, Spanish or both at the secondary level for several years. After that, he plans to pursue graduate studies. Eventually he would like to become a college professor or work in another branch of education, such as administration.

Taking research abroad

English Festival

The UW-Eau Claire English Festival is a weeklong, campuswide, student-run language arts conference, one of the largest of its kind in the country. It is comprised of student presentations and performances on topics within cultural studies, including linguistics, critical theory, film, the rhetoric of science and literatures written in English. In addition to traditional panels and discussions, the annual event features visiting national and regional writers, a citywide children’s writing contest and reading, and live music and slam poetry on the Campus Mall.
Zachary Stensen grew up in the small town of Augusta, where he knew almost everyone. The distinct personalities and dress of some of the local characters were things Stensen, an art student at UW-Eau Claire, wanted to capture on canvas through his painting.

“I’d seen pictures done by my great-great-grandfather, who was an artist and pastor in the late 19th century,” Stensen said. “I had seen how those people lived on through his art, and I wanted to do the same thing with these people from my hometown.”

In a series of five paintings, Stensen tried to show the unique nature of each person.

The portraits were done as part of a collaborative project with Sandra Starck, a UW-Eau Claire associate professor of art & design.

As Stensen worked on the portraits, Starck would visit him in the studio to discuss the ideas behind the work and make suggestions.

“It’s a different kind of collaboration in art,” Stensen said. “Obviously you are...
Lessons from history

Helen Young received an A for the history capstone project she completed in December 2008 before graduating from UW-Eau Claire. The good grade reflects skills she gained that have proven very valuable in her first job with a Fox River nonprofit organization.

Preparing the capstone paper on historical pageantry strengthened her writing and research abilities, which she is using in her current job for Friends of the Fox, a river advocacy group.

"Writing the 55-page paper helped me learn different types of research processes," Young said. "I learned how to thoroughly research a topic, make judgments, do an analysis and come to conclusions."

Young’s paper, "The Chippewa Valley Historical Pageant: The Story of the Progressive Movement in Eau Claire," looked at the impact of the progressive movement in Eau Claire through the lens of the historical pageantry movement. For her new employer, Young has begun researching, consulting and developing a project to obtain a designation from the National Park Service for the Fox-Wisconsin Rivers Parkway as a National Heritage Area.

She is helping write a feasibility study to be presented to the U.S. Congress, which includes a large section on the historical significance of the parkway and outlines the possible areas of interpretation.

Young credits her work with UW-Eau Claire history faculty member Dr. John Mann, her cooperating professor on the capstone research project, for preparing her to write the feasibility study.

"For my current project, I have to write a large portion of the feasibility study on the
History of the river corridor," she said. "This work closely relates to my capstone — conducting in-depth historical research and utilizing my writing skills to produce a public document."

Fall 2009 marked the 25th anniversary of student-faculty collaborative research done for the history capstone class at UW-Eau Claire. The two-semester class, in which all history majors complete a research paper, was first required in 1984-85. In 1994-95 it was replaced by a class that required students to complete their research paper based on primary sources and engaging secondary literature.

In 2000-01 the department also created a sophomore seminar, which introduces students to historical methods and the research process so they are prepared when they begin their capstone project their senior year.

In addition to using primary and secondary literature, history students have to collaborate with the faculty member teaching the seminar, other students in class and a second faculty member whom they choose as a cooperating professor.

Students often present their capstone papers in public venues, including the student conference consortium with UW-La Crosse, Winona State University, St. Mary’s University of Minnesota in Winona, Minn., and Viterbo University in La Crosse.

In recognition of the exceptional work of the UW-Eau Claire history professors, the UW-Eau Claire history department was awarded the UW System Board of Regents Teaching Excellence Award for Academic Departments in 2006.

“Dr. Mann treated me like a colleague, and I was able to learn so much from him during the process of preparing the paper.”

Helen Young
The UW-Eau Claire Blugold Fellowship program captured Eric Weber’s attention when he was searching for a college to attend.

“I was really curious about the program,” Weber said. “Then when I got here and got to know the professors, I realized that there’s not another program that I know of that is comparable to UW-Eau Claire’s.”

The Blugold Fellowship included a scholarship and a stipend to assist a faculty member on a research project in his freshman and sophomore years. Weber took full advantage of the opportunity by working with Dr. Marc Goulet on mathematics education research and Dr. Michael Penkava on deformation and cohomology theory.

As a result of the research, Weber was able to give research presentations at several national conferences, including the National Conferences on Undergraduate Research. He also helped author two papers.

In addition to the Blugold Fellowship, he received several other UW-Eau Claire Foundation scholarships. In spring 2008 he was awarded a prestigious Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship, the highest undergraduate award in mathematics and sciences in the United States.

He credits his research opportunity at UW-Eau Claire with making it possible for him to be admitted to the nationally renowned mathematics education research program at Arizona State University, where he received a full-tuition scholarship in January 2008.

“Having the experience of writing papers for journals and presenting at the national level was very important in getting into the graduate program I wanted,” Weber said. “The Foundation assistance I received gave me the opportunity to focus on my research instead of having to work a lot to pay tuition.”

The opportunity to do undergraduate mathematics research really sets UW-Eau Claire apart from other universities, Weber noted.

“Math research is usually reserved for doctoral students,” Weber said. “UW-Eau Claire really prepares you for what you do in a master’s and Ph.D. program.”

Weber plans to teach college mathematics after earning his doctorate.

Blugold Fellowships

Each year UW-Eau Claire offers 20 incoming freshmen an opportunity to work as assistants to university faculty on scholarly projects. Students selected for the Blugold Fellowship receive a $1,000 scholarship and, for their work as faculty assistants, a $1,200 stipend, which is renewable their sophomore year. The total value of the fellowship is $4,400. To be eligible, prospective students must rank in the top 25 percent of their high school graduating class, have an ACT score of 25 or greater and write an essay.

Nearly 200 students from almost every discipline have participated in the program since it was started in 1998. Blugold Fellows gain in-depth knowledge on a subject and build relationships with faculty early on in their college careers.

The program is partially funded through the UW-Eau Claire Foundation.
During the 2008 Kaleidoscope of Nursing Scholarship event, senior Heather Nichols presented a poster on research that she and fellow students Emily Skurla and Allison Quinn had conducted with Dr. Cheryl Lapp, a UW-Eau Claire associate professor of nursing. Presenting next to Nichols was her mother, Teresa, a trauma nurse at St. Joseph’s Hospital in Marshfield.

“It was something special to present posters at the same time,” Nichols said. “My mom was very excited about it.”

The research that allowed Nichols to present at the event involved surveying military veteran nurses who had served in Iraq and Afghanistan and studying their emotional resilience in the home-coming process. It involved preparing the interview tool, interviewing the nurses and sharing the data within the group, compiling the data and creating the poster.

Nichols had a personal motivation for doing the research.

“I hope to join the military as a nurse, so I was very interested in the perspective these nurses had,” Nichols said. “It was empowering to hear that these nurses were able to form informal support systems overseas, and most had a great nursing experience unmatched by experiences they had in civilian life.”

The experience will benefit the young researchers in their nursing careers, Lapp said.
“It will help them become wise consumers of research as well as leaders doing research,” Lapp said. “Research is emphasized in nursing education to help develop the scholarship of nursing, and our students are encouraged to be part of evidence-based practice.”

Nichols said it was interesting to hear about the coping experience of the nurses — how they normalized being bombed and hearing gunfire.

“It was amazing what they did and the strength of the individuals,” Nichols said. “Most of them developed a strong sense of belonging and importance from helping so many people in critical conditions.”

Nichols, Skurla, Quinn and Lapp gave poster presentations at Posters in the Rotunda in the state Capitol, at the UW System Symposium, for Sigma Theta Tau and at UW-Eau Claire’s Student Research Day in 2009.

“Even though these were undergraduate researchers, they didn’t skip any steps,” Lapp said. “They did not sacrifice quality in any way.”

An outstanding student, Nichols received the UW-Eau Claire Foundation’s Student Nurses Scholarship in 2009-10, the Rodaynah Obaid Nursing Scholarship for 2007-08 and the Phi Kappa Phi study abroad travel grant in 2008. Nichols used the honor society grant to participate in the eight-week Costa Rica Nursing and Health Care Professionals program. Following graduation, she is considering joining either the U.S. Navy or the U.S. Air Force.

Kaleidoscope of Nursing Scholarship

Designed for nurses from the community, the Kaleidoscope of Nursing event also gives nursing students and faculty an opportunity to meet and present scholarship activities that relate to improving nursing practice. A keynote speaker and several breakout and poster sessions are featured. Celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2010, the event is sponsored by the Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing and its Eau Claire chapter, Delta Phi. It also is sponsored by the UW-Eau Claire College of Nursing and Health Sciences and UW-Eau Claire Continuing Education.

Excellence in Scholarship

As illustrated by these stories, undergraduate research and creative activities have become a mark of excellence at UW-Eau Claire. Continuing and expanding this caliber of faculty mentoring for students is a goal of the university’s strategic plan.

“Because student scholarship is a priority at UW-Eau Claire, the size of the faculty-student collaboration program at UW-Eau Claire continues to grow,” said Karen Havholm, assistant vice chancellor for research and sponsored programs. “Currently the Center of Excellence funds about 200 scholarly projects each year. In 2008-09 it supported the research of 325 student scholars with $650,000.”

More than 400 students present results of their research, scholarly and creative projects during Student Research Day at UW-Eau Claire. Students also present at the UW System Symposium and Posters in the Rotunda. Each year UW-Eau Claire sends approximately 150 students to professional conferences as well as the National Conferences on Undergraduate Research. Many student scholars have the opportunity to publish in professional journals as well as university publications such as Prism, a journal published by the department of philosophy and religious studies; the Journal of Undergraduate Kinesiology Research, an online publication of the kinesiology department; and NOTA, a literary arts journal published by the English department.

The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs directs the activities of the Center of Excellence for Faculty and Undergraduate Student Research Collaboration. In addition ORSP coordinates and administers a variety of internally funded research and professional development programs, and facilitates proposal preparation and submission to extramural agencies to support research and other needs of the institution.

When the Center of Excellence was created, some funds were provided by the UW System and the UW-Eau Claire Foundation to help build the program. After a decade of growth, the students themselves added support through the UW-Eau Claire differential tuition program. In addition, some students are supported in their scholarly work through funding secured by faculty and staff from external sources.

A stalled economy and severe state budget cuts make funding these scholarly activities more challenging than ever. You can help more students, like the ones highlighted in this publication, find their education and career direction through a gift to the UW-Eau Claire Foundation in support of faculty-mentored student scholarship and creative activity.
You can make a difference by investing in scholarly activities at UW-Eau Claire. Go to the UW-Eau Claire Foundation’s Web site at [www.uwec.edu/fndn/giving.htm](http://www.uwec.edu/fndn/giving.htm) and indicate that your gift is for faculty and undergraduate student research collaboration.

For more information about detailed gift plans and options, contact Kimera Way, UW-Eau Claire Foundation executive director, at [waykk@uwec.edu](mailto:waykk@uwec.edu) or 715-836-5630.

For more information about the UW-Eau Claire Office of Research and Sponsored Programs or the Center of Excellence, go to [www.uwec.edu/orsp](http://www.uwec.edu/orsp) or contact Karen Havholm at [orsp@uwec.edu](mailto:orsp@uwec.edu) or 715-836-3405.