

Project ASSIST Helps Students Succeed in College

by Amy Pikalek

Sarah Babe, 18, of Burlington, has dreams of becoming a broadcast announcer. Bennett Rock, 18, of Madison, wants to work in a business-related field. They both plan to attend UW-Whitewater this fall, and both believe that a little extra hard work over the summer will help them reach their goals.

Babe and Rock are two of the 44 students who attended a four-week summer transition program offered through Project ASSIST (Adult Services Supporting Instructional Survival Tactics) at UW-Whitewater, July 10-Aug. 3.

Project ASSIST is UW-Whitewater's support program for students with learning disabilities. It was first started on a small scale by the Special Education Department in 1977. A federal grant in 1985 helped the program grow. In July 1999, it was moved to the Office of Graduate Studies and Continuing Education, which is partially funded by UW-Extension.

"The program is based on the idea that students with learning disabilities can learn specific strategies that will enable them to succeed in college," said Nancy Amacher, director of Project ASSIST. "We provide one-on-one tutoring, workshops, and study groups for students throughout the school year. And during the summer, we offer a study skills course designed to provide students with the skills they will need to make the transition to university life."

Amacher said studies show that students with learning disabilities

who participate in programs like Project ASSIST are significantly more successful in college and more likely to graduate than those who don't.

"Project ASSIST operates under the philosophy that we need to invest in every student's future, to find ways to make all students successful, productive members of society," she said.

Although there's a dearth of specific data that tracks the success and retention of students with disabilities, Amacher firmly believes Project ASSIST and programs like it help students with special needs keep up with their peers.

According to Amacher, of the 32 students enrolled in the 1999 summer transition program, 23 students, or 72 percent, are still enrolled at UW-Whitewater for this fall. The most recent data available at the UW-System Office of Policy Analysis and Research show that the overall freshman retention rate at UW-Whitewater is 83.1 percent.

Babe, Rock, and the other students in the summer transition program spent seven hours a day in the classroom. The three-credit study skills course focused on note-taking skills, test-taking strategies, study habits, and time management. Of course, there were also weekly quizzes and homework assignments, a term paper, and midterm and final exams.



Project ASSIST Director Nancy Amacher (left) explains the best way to use an academic planner to record assignments, exam dates and other academic information to student Sarah Babe.

While the summer transition program is optional, students admitted to the university on their own are encouraged to take it. Students who received a special admission must earn an A or B in the course to continue at the university for the fall semester.

"I'm in this class because I want to adjust to college life and to learn a lot of the study skills that I never picked up in high school," Babe said. "Besides, I think this will give me a leg up on the other incoming freshmen."

The students also spent two hours a day learning about the campus, the surrounding community, and getting to know the other students. For Rock, these are the biggest benefits.

"I came here this summer to get an understanding of what support services UW-Whitewater has for me, and how I can get that help," he said. "I also wanted to be able to get used to the campus. It's been really easy. Everybody's been really helpful."

The Project ASSIST summer transition program also offers students like Babe and Rock an opportunity to develop confidence and a sense of independence. Those feelings make the hard work well worth it.

"I feel more comfortable about being here, on the UW-Whitewater campus," Babe said. "I wasn't sure at first, but now I can say, 'yeah, I can handle this.'"



Al Beaver (right) holds his granddaughter, Gillian Bush, as he speaks with UW-Extension employees Jamie Van Eyck and Rick Mills at the Pyle Center in Madison. More than 300 people attended receptions and a dinner on June 29 to honor the retiring Interim Chancellor. Guest speakers at the dinner program included Gov. Tommy G. Thompson and UW System President Katharine Lyall.



UW-Extension Interim Chancellor Al Beaver presents a plaque to Tony Lorbetske of Sugar Camp, Wis., recognizing his 44 years of service to the Oneida County Extension Education Committee. Lorbetske was one of many honorees at the Wisconsin Associated County Extension Committee's annual conference in Superior, Wis., on June 25-27. Dean Carl O'Connor presided at the awards presentations, saying, "Each of these award winners is an example of the hard-working, results-oriented partnerships that we in UW-Extension enjoy with our county colleagues."



Kevin Reilly

Message from the Chancellor

Last month, I outlined four key areas where the Chancellor's office would focus its attention. Among those was UW-Extension's leadership role in preparing Wisconsin for the challenges of our new economy.

As *extension News and Ideas* goes to print, we are preparing to bring three budget proposals to the UW Board of Regents for approval. Each relates directly to the University's role in the new economy:

High-tech business development

We are seeking more GPR dollars to enhance support for high-tech start-up companies, and existing technology businesses, by expanding Small Business Development Center services. Three new regional centers would focus exclusively on promoting the establishment and growth of new science and technology firms in Wisconsin.

Through one-on-one counseling, workshops and networking, the centers are successfully promoting entrepreneurship in Wisconsin. If we use the same methods to focus on the unique needs of high-tech businesses, we can help new industries take root here, create jobs and reshape our economy.

Best practices initiative for youth and family

Since new and old businesses alike will rely on a steady stream of educated, productive workers, we are proposing a statewide initiative to enhance programs that target children, youth and families. The effort would provide a "best practices" framework to gather and disseminate information on family and human services programs.

This model does not represent a specific *program* designed to serve a single group of constituents or geographic region. Rather, we're prepared to use our statewide network to help local agencies design and deliver their own programs—based on their own communities' unique needs—using quality research and proven techniques.

Instructional technology brokerage

To keep pace with the needs of a high-tech society, UW campuses must employ state-of-the-art instructional methods and technology. As UW institutions adopt more centralized and distributed learning systems, faculty and staff will need help identifying and testing IT products and gaining the skills needed to incorporate them into

their curricula. They will also need direction on how to use technology to interact with UW System colleagues.

Working cooperatively with all UW institutions, UW-Extension can provide much of this coordination and support. As part of a larger UW System proposal, then, we're offering to conduct research and assessment, design curricula and operate an instructional technology clearinghouse. By coordinating our powerful array of services, infrastructure and expertise, we can efficiently "broker" IT information.

The Board of Regents will consider each of these proposals at its Aug. 24-25 meeting, along with all other UW System budget initiatives. If approved, they will go on to the Governor for consideration in the 2001-03 state budget. He will then submit a proposed budget to the Legislature.

I believe that UW-Extension can—and will—play an active role in shaping Wisconsin's future. I would like to thank everyone who has worked on these proposals and those who will contribute to their future implementation. If you have questions or comments about this process, I welcome your responses. Please email me at reilly@admin.uwex.edu.

Kevin P. Reilly
Chancellor

UW-Extension Staff Contribute to WPT's *Water Rich, Water Poor*



Historically, Wisconsin has had all the water it can use, but there are recent signs that it might not be the bottomless resource we once thought it was.

On Thursday, Aug. 31, at 7 p.m. Wisconsin Public Television will premiere *Water Rich, Water Poor*, a documentary suggesting that the state's water supply may be dwindling. A framing event for the program, produced by Art Hackett, is

the Perrier Corp.'s recent plans to drill for water and build a bottling plant in Wisconsin.

"Wisconsin has never really had a concern about conserving water," Hackett said. "How much can we use before it becomes a real problem?"

Several experts with UW-Extension ties contributed to the documentary. Ronald Hennings and Ken Bradbury of the Wisconsin Geo-

logical and Natural History Survey, and George Kraft of the Central Wisconsin Groundwater Center, Stevens Point, served as commentators.

Dan Undersander, a crop program specialist with a joint appointment to Cooperative Extension and the UW-Madison College of Agriculture, and Eric Bangerter of Cooperative Extension's Electronic Publishing Group, are providing Web content to support the broadcast.

The Distance Education Clearinghouse, developed and managed by Instructional Communications Systems, was recently recognized by the American Society for Training and Development as one of its 20 top picks for useful training and workplace-related Web sites, and by the Institute for Scientific Information, which now includes the clearinghouse in its collection of scholarly, high-quality Web sites.

Neil Lerner

(SBDC Madison) has been named the Wisconsin SBDC Star Performer, an award bestowed by his statewide business counselor peers. Lerner will be honored at the national conference of the Association of Small Business Development Centers in October.



Cooperative Extension

received the 1999 Serengeti Circle award from the Zoological Society and the Milwaukee County Zoo for in-kind contributions. Given to a select few donors each year, the award recognizes UW-Extension's work in helping the society with animal and environmental science education programs for Wisconsin's youth.

At the recent PBS annual meeting, Wisconsin Public Television won three national PBS Communications Awards — Best of Show for print and video promotion of *Safe Night USA*; Best National Promotion of a PBS Show for *Safe Night USA*; and Best Tune-in Video Promo for the show *Ballykissangel*.

The Homeownership Counseling Education Consortium of Milwaukee

of which Cooperative Extension is a partner, was recently given a "Best Practices" award by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The award recognizes programs that use innovative methods to make a significant difference in the lives of people in the communities they serve.

This month the UWEX Risk Management Team will receive the Outstanding Extension Group Award at the 2000 American Agricultural Economics Association Convention in Orlando. Those named from Wisconsin include Project Directors Bob Cropp, UW-Madison Extension, and Kevin Bernhardt, UW-Platteville Extension.

Two Co-op Service Units Relocate

Cooperative Extension's Media Collection and Publications Unit have moved to the former Photo Media building on the UW-Madison campus, 45 North Charter Street, Madison, Wis., 53715-1296. Call Media Collection at 262-3514, or 800-353-3514, and the Publications Unit at 262-3346, or 877-WIS-PUBS (947-7827).

Fluno Center Available

The new Fluno Center welcomes UWEX employees in Madison to use its executive dining room. The center, an executive education facility at 601 University Ave., serves breakfast and lunch Monday through Friday, and dinner Sunday through Thursday. A study pub is also available from 4:30 p.m. to midnight Sunday through Thursday. For more information, call 877-773-5866.

With help from the SBDC

Filmmaker Seeks Investors for 'Big Screen' Project

by Joel Bradtke

MILWAUKEE—The script is ready. Locations are scouted. Musicians and cast are identified. All Bradley Pruitt needs now is a few investors willing to share his vision. That and \$250,000 in seed money.

He's turned to UW-Milwaukee's Small Business Development Center for help in business planning that will line up the dollars for his full-length feature film, *Wide Open*.

"I have a comprehensive film business plan," Pruitt said. "Now we're adding cash flow and revenue streams to the plan."

Business counselor Pravin Kamdar, one of the SBDC resource people assisting Pruitt, has been helping him do the research to find a few good investors. Another SBDC business counselor, Maurice Brown, helped Pruitt extend his business financial projections over three years.

"He's ready to go. I think he has a winner," said Brown.

A Milwaukee native, Pruitt had a successful career in the financial service industry in Atlanta before returning to Wisconsin nearly eight years ago. He loves his hometown and wants his film to premiere

here. While he's adamant about the Milwaukee setting, Pruitt expects the film to have a broader appeal.

"You could be anywhere and relate to this film," he said. "*Wide Open* is about how the economics of a big city like Milwaukee have changed. It deals with race and class issues, the media and the police."

As a filmmaker, Pruitt knows what it takes to get marketplace acceptance.

"You have to get exposure in film festivals," he said. "The first line of customers are the film distributors' acquisition executives. They decide whether to pick up a film based on their own and audience reactions."

Pruitt has ideas for at least four more motion pictures and says he has a good feel for his ultimate film audiences. "The need for films for people of color is great," he said.

As he searches for investors, Pruitt plans to do both filmmaking and more of the youth development in the visual arts he's been involved in.

"It's my hope that the 'for-profit' ventures like the films will feed the nonprofit work," he said.



Filmmaker Bradley Pruitt combines patience with determination as he seeks financing for a full-length feature motion picture.

Pruitt Works With Youth in Visual Arts

For as long as he can remember, Bradley Pruitt has worked in visual images. And he has a passion for sharing his experience with young people. He's co-founder and principal of a nonprofit organization called Collaborative Effect, whose goal is to do community and youth leadership development in the visual arts. Nothing pleases Pruitt more than to put a video camera into the hands of eight-year-olds.

"They become instant videographers, and they get quite good at that," he said.

Pruitt said the experience of creating a not-for-profit organization for youth was time consuming, but worth it.

"It's the pressure that turns coal to diamonds," he quipped.

For Voter Information and Campaign Updates, Check Out WisconsinVote.Org

By Moira Harrington



Patty Loew and Jerry Huffman, hosts of Wisconsin Public Television's *WeekEnd* news and public affairs program, will contribute to the wealth of campaign information available on www.wisconsinvote.org. *WeekEnd* airs 7 p.m. Fridays and 11 a.m. Sundays.

Come this fall, the race between two political scions, each making his own bid for the White House, will finally be at full throttle.

Across the state, U.S. Sen. Herb Kohl's campaign slogan "Nobody's

Senator but Yours" —and whatever other slogans advertising people might dream up—will saturate the airwaves.

Local electoral races will spark debates among communities,

where voter decisions will eventually affect everything from property taxes to education, from land-use choices to health care funding.

It's the political season, and to help voters sort through the flotsam and jetsam of campaigns, the UW-Extension, Wisconsin Public Radio and Wisconsin Public Television have teamed up to create the Wisconsin Vote Web site, www.wisconsinvote.org.

"It's really an honor to play a role in helping voters make their choices in November," said Kathy Bissen, WPT's director of News and Public Affairs.

Launched earlier this year, the Web site focused heavily on the race for a state Supreme Court justice. Now, it's being updated to offer the latest news on the races for president, for Wisconsin's U.S. Senate and congressional seats and for state Senate and Assembly.

Using streaming video and audio, the site offers visitors instant ac-

cess to updates on breaking news, candidate biographies, interviews and more. The interactive site features chat rooms, moderated discussions with candidates and weekly opportunities for voters to offer their opinions in surveys and polls. The site archives past broadcast reports and talk shows, which will be searchable by topic so that voters can easily find candidate voting records, position papers and campaign finance reports.

"Combining this tremendous tool, the Internet, with the expertise of our reporters and those of Wisconsin Public Radio has been a wonderful experience that we hope will pay off on election day with a more engaged, informed electorate," Bissen said.

Tourism: A Key to Retail Development in Small Communities

By Pamela Seelman

Editor's Note: This is the second in a series of four articles featuring the 2000 Community Development Symposium presentations.

Throughout Wisconsin many smaller communities trying to maintain a healthy retail economy are turning their sights to tourism.

"Major changes have occurred in recent years in how and where local residents shop," said Bill Ryan, Cooperative Extension business development specialist. "One strategy that's helped some retailers is targeting tourist dollars, as shopping and tourism often go hand in hand."

Half of Wisconsin's estimated \$7.7 billion traveler expenditures are retail- or food-service-related. Successful retailing in many small and rural communities is often rooted in the growth of innovative businesses that serve both local residents and visitors.

We learned that selling to tourists is not simply offering them knick knacks and T-shirts.

— Bill Ryan, Cooperative Extension business development specialist

To help Wisconsin and other Midwestern small and rural communities attract tourists to local businesses, Ryan worked with a team of UW-Extension Community, Natural Resources and Economic Development agents interviewing people in 10 communities and 100 businesses.

The team compiled 10 case studies as prime examples of how to capitalize on tourism niches. The intent was to come up with practical tips on retailing and tourism that could be used by entrepreneurs and local tourism and economic development leaders, Ryan said.

"We learned that selling to tourists is not simply offering them knick knacks and T-shirts," he said. "Successful retailers are offering a wide variety of products useful to both visitors and residents."

"We also learned that not just specialty retail shops benefit from



Retailers that benefit from tourism have opportunities to sell both convenience and speciality items to travelers, including agricultural produce and gifts. Germantown Glass and Gifts and Christmas Chalet features ethnic European collectibles.



tourism dollars. A smaller community that can't support a hardware store, for example, might have a hardware store because tourists help boost sales."

Information gathered in the interviews was used to create the publication, *Tourism and Retail Development: Attracting Tourists to Local Businesses*. By using the publication, current and prospective small-community retailers can learn how tourism is tied to retailing, how to analyze the market and how to build on successful strategies used by others. View the guidebook on the Cooperative Extension's Publishing Web site, www.uwex.edu/ces/pubs.

Ryan said that the project results offer opportunities for UWEX faculty and staff to better serve the educational needs of communities and their businesses, and to work more closely with UWEX partners at the Wisconsin Departments of Tourism and Commerce.

The results are also being shared statewide by the Department of Tourism and UW-Extension Community, Natural Resources and Economic Development faculty.

Working with Ryan on the project as the lead field researcher was Jim Bloms, now the Burnett County community resource development agent. Gerry Braatz, Calumet County community resource development agent, helped develop presentation materials and other UW-Extension Community, Natural Resources and Economic Development staff provided additional assistance.

Germantown: Celebrating German Heritage with Visitors

The Tourism and Retail Development project highlights ten communities in Wisconsin and the Midwest showcasing ways they increased retail activity by targeting the visitor market.

"In each case, community leaders and business operators identified attractions that draw visitors to their community," said Bill Ryan, Cooperative Extension business development specialist. "They also studied their visitors to assess purchasing preferences and potential. Each case study provides information and ideas that may be transferable to other communities."

The village of Germantown, for example, offers German heritage, history and culture in a friendly and charming community just outside of Milwaukee. Visitors include bus tours and day-trippers drawn by the community's reputation and events that celebrate its ethnic heritage. Retailers serve the market by making shopping a cultural experience, with authentic products in buildings reminiscent of those in Germany.

Ethnic businesses include Jerry's Old Town Inn and the Von Rothenburg Bier Stube and Bier Garden; the Sinter Klausen Christmas Markt; the AppleWorks/Germantown Orchards; and the German Glass and Gifts and Christmas Chalet.

"Germantown's pride in its heritage is evident in its authenticity and sincere hospitality," Ryan said. "Grocery stores still maintain bilingual signs, and the shopkeepers' last names readily reveal their roots."

The residents and village government have embraced the ethnic and cultural theme of the private property owners. For example, the new village hall is a beautiful facility patterned after traditional German buildings. As renovation continues, new lampposts and cobblestone streets are scheduled to be installed.

Coauthors of the publication included Jim Hovland, Fond du Lac County community resource development agent, and David Scheler of the Tourism Department.

A Microsoft PowerPoint presentation is available to educators for delivering local and customized

workshops on the topic of tourism and retail development. Project materials are also being used this fall by three Small Business Development Centers throughout the state.

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