



Torchlight eNewsletter - Winter 2021



Torchlight is a companion publication of the Torch for alumni and friends of UMN Crookston.

Frosty February Greetings, Alumni and Friends,

Reflecting on many recent shifts in our world, lives, jobs, and as stated poignantly in a Sheryl Crow song titled, “A Change Would Do You Good,” one may ponder the question, how much more change would actually do us good? If you allow yourself to dive deep into the realities of our current events, social, political, climate, health – things are rapidly moving and changing like a freight train on a tight bend without the space and time to consider stopping. And yet, somehow we stay on track, and are strong and more resilient as a result. (*Virtual high five!*)

Once a person has been “out in the world” for a while, for some, change becomes a little more comfortable. When I think how it relates to our campus, students, and alumni, one thing is crystal clear to me - we are not alone, and there are people and places who care about you, who you may not yet know. When our graduates launch into the next phase of their lives, we wish to continue fostering a bond between them and the University. We want to find ways to be present in good times, challenging times, during highs, lows, and everything in between. Within the past year or so, we’ve seen several examples where alumni are making a career shift or students wish to connect with professionals in their field. Our goal as your alumni team at UMN Crookston is to be a resource. It is possible we could create a useful

and forward thinking network of superstar, workforce-seasoned alumni to aid in connecting dots with those just getting started or others positioned to make a lane change.

How can we help? Let us start by being one of your first phone calls or emails as you shift gears in your journey. Ask us whether we might know of University of Minnesota alumni or stakeholders in your field who could serve as a mentor or connector to your next big step. We hope to establish ambassadors in each of our majors - those willing to be that mentor or dot connector for other alumni or students who are seeking employment or advice. Can you see yourself as one of those people? If so, please reach out to me.

There are other changes in life that are perhaps less comfortable. It was said to me by several colleagues that commencement day at UMN Crookston is bittersweet. I really didn't understand how this could be. It's a day of celebration. It's a joyful time of transition after a job well done. Now with more than five years at UMN Crookston - I get it.

Watching students come and go is much like watching my own child take flight after a milestone achievement (pass the tissues please). As many of you know, faculty and staff at UMN Crookston build lasting relationships with many of our students as they learn, grow, and thrive right in front of our eyes. In January 2021, our department said a tearful adieu to two of our superstar students who landed their first career opportunities right here at their alma mater after working for several years for the Office of University Relations as student assistants/interns. Maggie Mills served as our social media specialist since her 2019 graduation, and Cassandra Morthera Navarrete served as our communications specialist since her walk across the stage in 2018. We are so proud of them, and I know with all my heart this change will do them good – but it's one far more difficult to take than I expected. Ultimately, we all succeed in this scenario. Meaning this move, each toward a new opportunity and professional growth, is what they came here to do in the first place, right? They achieved their degree then successfully created a pathway for the next stage of their journey.

To Maggie, Cassandra, and to all of you, our alumni and friends – remember we are here for you; to help connect dots when needed, to be a place to call home, and to cheer you on - always.

With warmest regards,



Brandy (Lietz) Chaffee 2000
Director and Chief Development Officer
University and Alumni Relations

#UMNproud #WingsUp #IAmCrookston





ALUMNI FEATURE STORIES

Alyssa LaSart 2017

Animal Industries Management

*Written by Lauren Wallace, senior, marketing and sport & recreation management
Bloomington, Minn.*

LaSart is where she is today because of her hard work at UMN Crookston and the passion that continues to drive her through veterinary school.

Drawn to the idea that "everybody knows everybody" at UMN Crookston, Alyssa LaSart became a Golden Eagle in 2015 and graduated in 2017 with a bachelor's degree in animal science with an emphasis in pre-vet. During her time on campus, LaSart enjoyed the small class sizes and opportunities she gained access to through the animal science program. She especially appreciated the hands-on experience provided by UMN Crookston because she didn't grow up working with farm animals. In addition to studying and working in her field, she was an employee at Regal's in the Eagle's Nest and enjoyed being a short walk away from her friends on campus. Following exams, she would celebrate with a dancing night at Arthur's Barn in Arthur, N.D.



LaSart's animal science professors helped her blossom into a farm animal lover. She still uses the information and life lessons she learned from Leslie Lekatz, Abdorrahman (Abdo) Alghamdi, Lyle Westrom, Harouna Maiga, and Terrill Bradford and would like to recognize Debbie Ramberg, Kelly Henry, Paige Stallard, MunJu Cho, and Angelika Huglen for helping her through a difficult time her senior year. LaSart feels she is able to connect with animal owners, animal lovers, and the farmers she works with every day thanks to everything she learned at the University of Minnesota Crookston.

Following graduation, LaSart was accepted into the University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine Class of 2021. She loves being surrounded by so many people who share similar goals of becoming veterinarians. Her classmates have become one big supportive family. During this school year she has been working through her fourth year clinicals where she rotates through different services in the teaching hospital for two weeks at a time. Her favorites include neurology, anesthesia, and oncology. She passed the North American Veterinary Licensing Exam and is well on her way to her dream career. LaSart states, "The only thing left between me and being a doctor is obtaining my degree in May and applying for a state license when I figure out where I would like to practice."

LaSart's passion for her field grew exponentially at UMN Crookston and provided her the drive to be heavily involved at vet school. She helps run the Open House at the U of I every fall by organizing and managing the cow milking booth. This provides the public with education on the dairy industry. Children learn how to milk cows and many myths surrounding dairy are debunked. LaSart always gets at least one question asking if chocolate milk comes from brown cows. On top of her involvement with the milking booth she was a team leader for the Resident Equine Program, has assisted with lamb watch, worked at a horsemanship, the dairy farm, client services, and as a surgical technician. She has assisted with 68 different surgeries ranging from orthopedics to abdominal and urogenital soft tissue cases.

She resides in Champaign, Ill., with her boyfriend as well as two dogs, several fish, and a parakeet. Quarantine has given her the time to try new things at home and she likes to knit, paint, and bake. Her experimental quarantine baking has included making crème brulee, cheesecakes, Italian frosting, and various pies and pastries all from scratch. She is now in charge of bringing dessert to all vet med friend gatherings. LaSart is where she is today because of her hard work at UMN Crookston and the passion that continues to drive her through veterinary school. A quote that serves as a reminder in her life is, "You never know when a moment and a few sincere words can have an impact on a life."

She always tries to show kindness to others because sometimes a few kind words can be the highlight of someone else's day.

Greg Hoffman 1986

Natural Resources Conservation

Written by Lauren Wallace, senior, marketing and sport & recreation management
Bloomington, Minn.

“It remains the perfect place to have started my professional journey for academic, professional, and personal reasons, and I am proud and grateful to be a Trojan”



Greg Hoffman 1986 always had an interest in conservation and natural resources. He grew up in southwest Minnesota and heard incredible remarks about the University of Minnesota Crookston from a high school friend. After learning about the two-year associate in applied science degree with an emphasis on natural resources, Hoffman was intrigued enough to make a visit to campus. During that visit, Hoffman met his immediate mentor and lifelong friend, Professor Emeritus Dan Svedarsky. This meeting is now marked as the beginning of Hoffman’s career and life in natural resources conservation, and was the first of many meaningful and transformative conversations with Svedarsky.

As a freshman, being away from family and tackling college courses was an intimidating challenge. Hoffman was overwhelmed at the time and wanted to quit, as he recalls telling Svedarsky, who talked him through it and ultimately wouldn’t let him give up. He is forever thankful for this guidance and believes students need people like that to get them through a post-secondary course load.

A fond memory Hoffman has includes the 1986 Trojan baseball team. He wants to give a big shout out to all those who knew him as “Flash” back in the day. Specifically, he remembers Rodney Cloose, a walk-on for the baseball team. Although Cloose hit Hoffman straight in the head with a baseball, the whole team admired his work ethic. The team collectively convinced their coach to let Cloose on the team, eventually voting him MVP.

Throughout Hoffman’s time at UMN Crookston he was actively preparing for his future through numerous internships, volunteer work, and temp positions. Although a competitive industry, wildlife and fishery careers don’t bring in a lot of money, which Hoffman understood. He heard his calling and wouldn’t want to be doing anything else. In addition to his degree in natural resources conservation from UMN Crookston in 1986, Hoffman earned his bachelor’s degree in wildlife and fisheries from South Dakota State University, and earned his master’s degree in fishery biology from the University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point.

From the classroom to the field, Hoffman moved to Montana and began working as a fisheries technician for Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. He is still in the area and has been working in the Kootenai River Valley as a fishery biologist for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Libby Dam. For the past 18 years he has been working with other biologists and water managers toward recovery of endangered Kootenai River white sturgeon. Their work was highlighted in a PBS documentary, “A Fish Between the Falls” and can be viewed here: <https://www.montanapbs.org/programs/fish-between-the-falls/>

In addition to the sturgeon keeping Hoffman captivated with the Kootenai area, there is a little place called Turner Mountain where he has been skiing ever since he moved there in 1996. Someone he worked with told him about this hidden gem, and better yet, offered him a free pass if he helped cut down brush in the fall. The resort has one ski lift and operates based on the tight-knit group of skiers and snowboarders who donate their time and labor. Everybody knows each other there, like one big family, which parallels Hoffman's experience at UMN Crookston.

Hoffman attended the Virtual Alumni Social in December and described seeing Svedarsky, the event's featured speaker, as if nothing had changed and a day hadn't passed. He was sitting at home, and through Hoffman's computer screen, looked just like he did as he sat at his desk in 1984. Looking back, his choice to attend UMN Crookston seems as natural today as it did back then. "It remains the perfect place to have started my professional journey for academic, professional, and personal reasons, and I am proud and grateful to be a Trojan," stated Hoffman.

Berneil Nelson 1942 ADV '43

Northwest School of Agriculture

*Written by Lauren Wallace, senior, marketing and sport & recreation management
Bloomington, Minn.*

*Nelson has forever touched the lives of everyone she
interacted with and left an everlasting legacy.*

*A Tribute in Memoriam of Berneil
January 8, 1925 - December 21, 2020*



Berneil Nelson was a beloved and dedicated alumna who positively influenced those around her. She grew up on a farm near Hallock, Minn., and attended country school as a child. She was a member of the Northwest School of Agriculture (NWSA) senior class of 1942 and graduated with the advanced class of 1943. She once described her time as very disciplined, as students were to be in their dorm rooms by 7 p.m., and when the clock struck 10 p.m., it meant lights out. Her days were filled with classes and school assemblies, which had assigned seats and started with devotional time and singing a hymn. As a hardworking student and an avid reader, Nelson was named "Best Girl Student" in her class yearbook. In addition to her studies, she played the cornet, was president of the Young Women's Christian Association, a member of the speech choir, the Aggie board, and helped out with the traditional Senior Day campus tour.

Post-graduation, Nelson began school at the Minnesota School of Business but was promptly offered a job with the NWSA. She returned to Crookston and became the secretary to the registrar. When the NWSA transitioned to the University of Minnesota Technical College in 1966 she stayed on as the assistant librarian for learning resources. Nelson's impressive work ethic and organizational skills meant she was able to take on a wide range of tasks including working with library budgets, coordinating magazine subscriptions, ordering books, and making the big switch over to the computer system. On top of that, she taught herself to catalog books, something most people go to library school to accomplish. She retired in

1990 and continued her involvement with the school by serving on the NWSA Alumni Association Board and later as an ex. officio member for many years. She often communicated with the Alumni Relations office providing information for the *Torch* magazine and routinely worked the registration table at the annual NWSA reunions on campus.

Her efforts and commitment to the NWSA and UMN Crookston did not go unnoticed. She received the NWSA "Top Aggie" award in 1974, the University of Minnesota Crookston Torch & Shield Award in 1981, the Distinguished Service Award in 1996, and the University of Minnesota Crookston Champions Club Award in 2005. At the 2017 NWSA summer reunion, Nelson was presented with the Northwest School of Agriculture Alumni "One of a Kind" Award and a \$1,000 annual UMN Crookston scholarship was established in her name by the Heritage Scholarship Fund. Aside from her dedication to the school, Nelson enjoyed bowling in the local ladies' league, reading, embroidery, attending senior events, visiting with family, and cheering on the Minnesota Twins, Timberwolves, and the Vikings. Nelson has forever touched the lives of everyone she interacted with and left an everlasting legacy.



maroon + gold
FRIDAYS!

Show your UMN Crookston Pride!

Share a picture of yourself in your best Maroon and Gold attire on social media!

Message us your pictures or tag us
@UMNCrookston



Did you know UMN Crookston offers
SCHOLARSHIPS
specifically for those who are
descendants of our alumni?



 **BUILD A LASTING** *Legacy*



Basketball

The University of Minnesota Crookston athletic teams opened up play in COVID-19 world at the beginning of January. The Golden Eagle men's and women's basketball teams are playing an abbreviated 16-game schedule with 14 Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference (NSIC) games and two non-conference games. The UMN Crookston men's basketball team has gone 2-10 with victories over Concordia University, St. Paul and University of Mary. The Minnesota Crookston women's basketball team has a 3-9 mark with two wins over Northern State University and a victory over University of Mary. Golden Eagle freshman Jes Martens (Devils Lake, N.D.) ranks ninth in NCAA Division II in steals and sixth for steals per game.



Hockey

The Golden Eagle hockey team returned to the ice for the first time in nearly a decade as they opened up play in ACHA Division II in January. UMN Crookston is 2-5 on the season with wins over the University of Jamestown and a 7-2 win over the University of North Dakota. Minnesota Crookston is currently ranked 18th out of nearly 200 teams in ACHA Division II.

Tennis

Minnesota Crookston tennis opened up the season February 3. The Golden Eagles are competing in 11 games in the NSIC. They opened the season with a 7-0 loss at Bemidji State University.

Softball

The Golden Eagle softball team is set to open the 2021 season February 10 with games against Bemidji State University and University of Jamestown in West St. Paul, Minn. UMN Crookston was picked to finish 14th in the NSIC. The Golden Eagles will play 44 games during the 2021 season.

Baseball

The Minnesota Crookston baseball team opens up the 2021 season March 6 with games in Fort Scott, Kan. The Golden Eagles earned their highest-ever preseason ranking as they were picked seventh in the NSIC Preseason Poll. UMN Crookston will compete in 40 games during the 2021 season.

Equestrian

The Minnesota Crookston equestrian team commences the 2021 season Friday, February 12, with an NCEA match at the University of Tennessee at Martin. The Golden Eagle hunt seat team will compete in five NCEA meets and five IHSA meets, including the IHSA Regional Championships in Fargo, N.D. The western equestrian team will compete in five IHSA meets this season, including hosting the IHSA Regional Championships at UTOC Sunday, April 11.



FACULTY FEATURE

UMN Crookston students experience hands-on learning opportunities in the Pottery Design and Techniques course.

Eric Castle

Associate Professor, Agriculture & Natural Resources

Written by Shawn Smith, Director of Athletic Communication (Athletics)/Interim Assistant Director of Communication (University Relations)

Students on the campus of the University of Minnesota Crookston are actively engaged in hands-on learning throughout the year. Eric Castle, associate professor in the Agriculture and Natural Resources department, has taken it to heart as he sought to show students in his Art 1353: Pottery Design and Techniques course they can make pottery from materials found in nature.



Castle learned the ancient technique of the Anasazis, a Native American people that inhabited the American southwest in modern day Colorado, Arizona, Utah, and New Mexico, during a class he had taken last summer. One of the teachers Castle learned from has been doing pottery since the 1970s and was contracted by the Bureau of Land Management.



Castle brought back his teacher's favorite clay and it became the root of one of the class projects in October. The process was an elaborate one as Castle taught his students how to utilize materials around them.

"We brought the clay back (to Crookston) in a bucket with chunks of this lightish-gray colored clay," Castle said. "From there we needed to process it and did so by going out in the Nature Nook and finding a good round rock from the landscaped areas to grind the clay and turn it into a fine powder. After mixing it to the right consistency, we made coil pots and let those dry."

When the pots were dry, Castle and his class focused on painting the pots using a technique known as black and white style. "There is a lot of evidence of white-looking pottery and the paint is black. To get that black color, we used paint made from Rocky Mountain Bee Plant." After the pots were painted, the focus became firing the clay to finalize the project. In order to stick with the ancient techniques of the Anasazi people, Castle needed to find sandstone and an area where the class could dig a hole for an underground kiln. With the help of staff in the Facilities Department at the UMN Crookston, they were able to find a location on campus to dig a pit about 14 inches deep, three feet wide, and eight feet long. Ideally this pit would be lined with sandstone slabs, however, sandstone doesn't occur naturally in this area. Fortunately, facilities saved pieces from around the windows of the old student center which were made of sandstone. Castle joked, "They stored the pieces for 30 years and apparently were waiting for a pottery class to come around."



Now that he had a location, the class had one final step of the project as they fired their clay pots in the underground kiln. "We came out one Sunday and got the fire started. To create those oxygen-starved conditions, you heat the fire until its peak temperature and right at that point you smother the fire. We took the dirt we excavated out of the pit and buried the kiln with all of the pottery inside and let that bake and cool overnight. The next day we dug it out and unearthed the pottery the students made."

Castle was very pleased with the project and is excited to teach his future classes the same style of pottery. One thing he is looking forward to is finding local clay and people who know more about the ancient traditions of the Red River Valley region.

Castle believes the project met his ultimate goal of helping show students they can make things with materials found right around them. Castle remarked, "You don't need fancy clay, you don't need a fancy

kiln. It is just this very primal way of connecting with the place you are. If you can find clay around you, that is a part of the place you live, you can take that clay and make something beautiful or useful or something beautiful and useful.”

ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT UPDATES

This section will feature news from one of our four academic departments along with links to updates/letters written especially for you by the department chairs. The University of Minnesota Crookston has two primary academic units, encompassing four departments, Agriculture and Natural Resources (AgNtr); Business (Bus); Humanities, Social Sciences and Education (HSSE); and Math, Science, and Technology (MST).

Feature:

Agriculture and Natural Resources



History of Ag Arama

Written by Professor Emeritus Lyle Westrom with input from retired staff and faculty, Tom Fiero and Dave Hoff

Ag Arama originated in 1975 when Gary McVey, Ph.D., was head of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Division. He was notified of a “margin of excellence program” with a four-day deadline to submit a proposal. The proposal was approved and Truman Tillerias served as the first advisor. Ag Arama would provide a way for University of Minnesota Crookston (UMC) students to have a fun break while enduring the long Minnesota winters. This would come in the coldest Minnesota month of January. Many accused

Ag Arama of causing the cold weather and certainly there were years when a blizzard or extreme cold limited the attendance. Ag Arama included livestock showmanship, crops/horticulture competitions, agriculture business salesmanship, natural resources games, royalty coronation, and a dance. Not all events were incorporated in year one nor were they all completed every year, but the majority of events were included most years.

The earliest record of any award being given at Ag Arama was the "True Grit Award" dedicated to Todd Opsahl, a student in 1973-74. This award was started in dedication to Todd after his fight with leukemia, eventually losing the battle shortly after he left college. It was known he participated in Agriculture and Natural Resources campus activities even during and after treatments that were painful. Todd was a fighter and overcame obstacles to actively participate in the early Ag Arama events. Those who knew Todd felt it was his "True Grit" that allowed him to participate even while in great pain. Hence, the "True Grit" award began in 1976 with Jeff Kratochwill 1977 being the first recipient. This award has been given annually since then with similar traits of resilience, active participation, and overcoming obstacles being important to continue the long tradition of Ag Arama. Throughout history, receiving the "True Grit" award is the most prestigious of any award given.

The early years of Ag Arama were held in the Winter Shows Building located south of the campus. The large arena provided much space for a multitude of events. It later moved to the north arena of the Winter Shows Building and finally to the campus University and Teaching Outreach Center (UTOC). Natural Resources faculty and staff have provided many contests such as tree felling, log splitting/chopping, log peeling, crosscut saw, pole (log) toss, match splitting, tobacco spitting later changed to sunflower seed spitting, and other fun natural resources games to create lively events such as snowshoeing and orienteering for students, alumni, and other community participants.

No awards given during Ag Arama are without great merit. Royalty (king/queen and prince/princess) are not a popularity event as sometimes perceived. It includes a faculty/student nomination, a written essay by the contestant (scored by faculty), an interview before a three-person panel of interviewers, and a vote by fellow students regarding effort put into Ag Arama. In 1987, prince and princess royalty were added. Six animal showmanship awards are now given since the addition of goat showmanship in recent years. Other showmanship include: horse, dairy, sheep, beef, swine, and lamb lead. The addition of novice competition was added by students over ten years ago and brought a dramatic increase in competitors and "expert showpersons" work with novices to improve their showmanship skills without competing against them. This took most of the intimidation of being a novice away and encouraged everyone to compete on a fair basis. That single decision may be the most important in the later years of Ag Arama. The top show person in each species competes against each other in "round robin" competition which pits the best against the best with all competitors having to show all six species. The winner of the round robin competition is truly a skilled show person who most people will marvel.

A large group of crops categories are also competed in each year. Similar to the animal competitions, an overall winner is awarded which again takes a very well rounded and talented individual to win. Some individual categories include cereal crops, oil seeds, small seeded legumes, large seeded legumes, grass seed, specialty crops, and forage crops.

Ag Arama has served as a common place for agriculture and natural resources alumni to return and visit with fellow alumni. Alumni showmanship began in later years and provides much fun and many laughs. An alumni social held prior to the dance so alumni can visit and exchange memories. Students and alumni may be tired, but they turn out for the dance that extends late into the evening. Sleep can come on a different day.

Each year the Ag Arama committee dedicates the event to an individual -- commonly a faculty member (often retired). Occasionally, it was given to other supportive community members. It is considered a great privilege to have Ag Arama dedicated to you and is even more meaningful since it is truly a student run organization.

Student leadership has been a hallmark of Ag Arama. Students gain many leadership experiences if they assume such a role in Ag Arama. When UMN Crookston converted from a two-year to a four-year institution, Ag Arama demonstrated the benefits of having students for four years of leadership. Faculty serve a secondary role in this event, with most faculty taking a turn as faculty advisor. It would be remiss not to mention the current advisor, Terrill Bradford, has taken far more years than any other faculty member. Students have come to appreciate her valued and wise council since the early 2000's. Lab technicians and faculty, along with division chairs, have provided needed support to students, especially when UMC was a two-year institution.

It is always difficult to measure the true worth of any event, but it can be argued Ag Arama provides the environment for developing leaders since it is one of the few university groups where decision making and operations are almost exclusively a result of student effort. The Ag Arama Committee would welcome all alumni to join them at Ag Arama in the coming years.



Ag-Arama Photo Gallery ►

Department Updates

- [Agriculture and Natural Resources](#)
- [Business](#)
- [Humanities, Social Sciences, and Education](#)
- [Math, Science and Technology](#)

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU



What's Your Story

We want to hear about your experiences at UMN Crookston or NWSA and how they have made an impact on your life.

[Tell Us](#)



Then & Now Photos

Send us your photos from when you were on campus to where you are at now. We'd love to feature you in the next newsletter.

[Submit Photos](#)



Update Your Info

We'd love to stay in touch with you. Please help us do so by updating your contact info.

[Update Now](#)

CAMPUS HAPPENINGS



I Am Crookston Marketing Campaign

In recognition of our I Am Crookston marketing campaign, we want to share some of the many reasons students decide to attend UMN Crookston.

- [Manpreet Singh, Information Technology](#)
- [Britton Fuglseth, Agricultural Education](#)
- [Matt Moroz, Business Management](#)
- [Leah and Hannah Macias, Communications](#)





UMN Crookston Teacher Candidates Receive GEER Grant to Aid in Critical Coursework During COVID-19 Pandemic

[GEER Grant](#)



UMN Crookston Has Nine Student-Athletes Earn NSIC Myles Brand All-Academic with Distinction Award

[Award Winning Athletes](#)



Minnesota Crookston's Commitment to Preserving History of Hispanics in Red River Valley Chronicled in Prairie Public Documentary and Art Exhibit.

[Preserving Hispanic History in Red River Valley](#)



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UMN Crookston and UMN Morris collaborate to strengthen recruitment

[Crookston and Morris Collaboration](#)



Oatmeal Raisin Memories

Written by Nan Thurston, Online Student Services Professional

Food always brings good memories. Our own Associate Professor Margo Rudstrom, Ph.D., is well known for having a pot of coffee ready. She started a tradition of her own when it came to providing a bit of comfort to her students during Ag Arama. “Back in 2009 my husband, Bob and I chaperoned our first Ag Arama dance. We really had no idea what to expect. Turns out chaperoning meant taking the cover charge, checking ID, and putting wristbands on students to identify who was over 21 and who wasn't. Bob and I have worked every Ag Arama dance since then.

Before we worked our first dance, we decided to make some oatmeal raisin cookies to give out at the dance. We thought that if the students would be drinking, they should probably eat something. We made four batches (about 200 cookies). They were a hit! The next year when students found out we would be working the Ag Arama dance again, they asked if we would be bringing cookies. That is how the tradition of Rudstroms cookies at the dance came about.” Margo told us the recipe is from the Quaker Oats container but we know that the baking is done from the heart. And it is obvious that it was always appreciated. “We really didn't need to worry about the directional "store tightly" part. The cookies were made in the afternoon and gone that evening.”

Ingredients

- 1 cup softened butter
- 3/4 cup firmly packed brown sugar
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 1/2 cups flour

- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3 cups Quaker Oats
- 1 cup raisins

Cooking Instructions

Heat oven to 350°F. In a large bowl, beat butter and sugars on medium speed of electric mixer until creamy. Add eggs and vanilla; beat well. Add combined flour, baking soda, cinnamon and salt; mix well. Add oats and raisins; mix well. Drop dough by rounded tablespoonfuls onto ungreased cookie sheets. Bake for 12 minutes or until light golden brown. Cool for one minute on cookie sheets; remove to wire rack. Cool completely. Store tightly covered.

TRIVIA



1. What has NOT been included in the wide range of activities offered at Ag Arama?

- Royalty coronation
- Sunflower seed spitting
- Butter carving
- Log peeling

2. Of the following, which showmanship category was most recently added to Ag Arama?

- Swine
- Goat
- Bear
- Sheep

3. What was the name of the first ever award, on record, given at Ag Arama?

- Finest Farmer Award
- Toughest Ag Award
- All American Award
- True Grit Award

ALUMNI AND FRIENDS PUBLICATIONS

Digital Archives

Dig deep into our new Crookston digital archive through the University of Minnesota's Digital Conservancy. Our collection includes: Aggie, Aggie Yearbook, Bulletin and Catalog, Commencement Programs, Commentator, Fourth Estate, New Student Directory, Northwest Monthly, Torch Magazine, Torchlight e-Newsletter, and more.



[Visit the Crookston Collection](#)

[How To: Navigate the Digital Conservancy \(Video\)](#)

LET'S BE SOCIAL

Check out our social media accounts!



>>> [UMN Crookston Event Calendar](#) <<<

Answers to Trivia: #1 - Butter carving, #2 - Goat, #3 - True Grit Award



The torch is a symbol of enlightenment used in faith, in the Olympics, and as part of our nation's Statue of Liberty. It's a sentiment our campus has used as a way of passing the responsibility and pride of our beloved institution to the next generation. Specifically, the torch has been passed to each class during commencement since 1968, illuminating the quality of education as well as the educational philosophy of the University of Minnesota.

Questions about our Torchlight e-Newsletter?

Contact Angelika Huglen, ahuglen@crk.umn.edu | 2900 University Ave, Crookston MN 56716
800-862-6466 | 218-281-8401 | crk.umn.edu



Humanities, Social Sciences, and Education Department

Update by Mark E. Huglen, Ph.D.

Professor and Department Chair

Greetings to alumni from the Department of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Education (HSSE)! We miss you around here, but happy you will always be a part of our extended family. We love to hear about what you are doing and about your successes so please drop us a line from time to time.



Here is a little update on our department as it looks in 2021: We are comprised of the following academic programs: applied studies, communication, criminal justice, early childhood education, elementary education, and English. Applied studies, communication, criminal justice, and English are offered both at the campus and online. Our department also shares two programs with the Agriculture & Natural Resources Department: agricultural communication and agricultural education.

Our HSSE minors are communication, criminal justice, English, humanities, music, and writing. Students from all areas of the campus have been completing a minor in one or more of these areas to enrich their education. The college in the high school program and English as a second language program are integral parts of the department. We also deliver many classes in the liberal education curriculum, providing a substantial number of course credits for the University of Minnesota Crookston.

For those around the campus who had never taught online before the COVID pandemic occurred, the learning curve was there for those faculty to transition into an online environment. Fortunately, many courses in HSSE were already taught online so when the pandemic occurred there was a seamless transition into the online environment. Education faculty are working to increase their online programming, English has their program online, communication has been online for many years, and criminal justice recently started offering the program online. Whereas the pandemic environment has been challenging in some ways, the HSSE faculty have drawn upon their abilities and available resources to adapt in creative ways to find new methods of delivering education. We are confident the future will include both campus and online instructional environments and feel we are pretty good at both!

I had the chance to catch up with three of our alum: Chad Klass 2019 who is pursuing a master of arts degree (MA) at The George Washington University; Jill (Zelinsky) Raaf 2011, MA, Birkbeck College, University of London, 2012; and Rikki Roscoe 2016, MA South Dakota State University, 2019, and pursuing a Ph.D. at the University of Missouri. I asked each of them how they are doing and how they are negotiating the pandemic environment.

Chad Klass

I work at a social media management company and my team manages the accounts of Lipton Tea USA. We respond directly to consumers who post messages to Lipton on its social channels. We also create and execute strategic communication campaigns for Lipton aimed at raising awareness and reputation for the brand, with

the goal of translating that into sales. You'll see an example of a campaign unfolding throughout February as Lipton posts content for Heart Health Month. This will include posts from influencer/partners. Crisis communication is another key aspect of our work. We monitor Lipton's channels to identify and deal with any issues before they become crisis situations.

When the pandemic hit, I was spared having to make the change to a home office that countless others made as I have been working in a virtual environment for over 20 years. The company where I work has teams that handle the social media accounts for travel and hospitality companies, and some of those teams have been hit hard as the clients have reduced their social media presence during the pandemic. Luckily, Lipton USA has grown during the pandemic as tea consumption has increased.

Currently, I'm working on my master's degree in strategic public relations from The George Washington University.

Jill (Zelinsky) Raaf

I am working at Medtronic as a senior meeting planner where I plan medical education meetings for cardiologists. Typically, I travel six to eight times per year around the country to host these events, but when COVID hit, I have been at home since March 13, 2020. I have been lucky enough to keep my job, especially in the events industry, and since transferring all of our events to a virtual platform we have actually been busier than ever finding new ways to reach our physicians. It seems they are really enjoying the option to save time away from their clinics and families and be virtual, so I can see our company using this platform, along with in person meetings, well into the future! For me, it was a challenging transition to be virtual since I love the face to face interactions during our events, but have embraced this new world as I get more comfortable with Zoom and find fun ways to keep our attendees engaged from behind their computer screens.

It was rewarding to see Medtronic take such a large role in the production of ventilators when things were getting really bad this spring. I'm proud to work for this Minnesota based company.

Jill Raaf's Photo Caption

Pictured with Jill are her husband, Brandon, sons Jace (six months), Blaine (9), and Brooks (6).



Rikki Roscoe

Rikki is a second-year doctoral student and graduate instructor in the Department of Communication at the University of Missouri. Her research focuses on the topics of stigma, identity, and inequality in relation to health communication. She seeks to improve health for underserved populations including military veterans. Rikki published in the top-tier journal *Health Communication*, received the Cooper Award for Excellence in Teaching from the Central States Communication Association, and served as an editorial assistant for *Management Communication Quarterly*.



I have taught variations of public speaking courses to undergraduates for nine semesters. After graduation (expected 2023), I look forward to pursuing a tenure-track position at a university to continue researching and teaching.

Fun fact: public speaking was the very first class I stepped into at UMC.

COVID-19 has made a huge impact on my Ph.D. experience. In a matter of a week, I had to shift my public speaking course online – which I had not taught online before. Summer 2020, I taught entirely online and had no choice but to teach public speaking in-person during fall semester 2020 in an auditorium style room where students could sit six feet apart and scream through masks. I found myself completing three-hour seminar courses (as a student) via zoom and some days I spend up to six plus hours on Zoom for meetings, classes, etc. I miss spending time with the other graduate students in the program – chatting about courses and teaching in our office space – which I no longer have access to. While COVID has been less than ideal, I am grateful for some of the new experiences I wouldn't have had otherwise, including online teaching.

To end, I want to say I'm grateful for the experiences and mentorship I received at UMC which, no doubt led me to where I am today. The close relationships I was able to form in the classrooms and how these relationships impacted my education influence the way I interact with the students I work with every day.



Business Department

Update by Kara Bowen

Lecturer

Department Chair



Faculty recognitions and awards

Our faculty continues to make connections and publish articles where knowledge is shared, and opportunities for continuing their research and obtaining funding are being pursued. Faculty present and publish their research work and outcomes to spread awareness of their work across the global academic community. Here are some of the things the Business Department have been doing:

- Virtual Conference August 21, 2020. Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP). The University of Minnesota Crookston's Business Department was granted official accreditation by the ACBSP in 2020.
 - Presenters: Rachel Lundbohm & Rutherford Johnson
 - (ACBSP) Title: Factors Influencing Perceptions of Student Learning in Hybrid Courses.
- International Conference on Social Science (ITAR) March 2020
 - Virtual presentation by Oxana Wieland
 - Title: The Impact of Chinese FDI in Nigeria: The perceptual outlook from the within
- Grace Menze was awarded Faculty Research Enhancement Funds (FERF)
 - Principal Investigators: Ali Saeedi & Grace Menze
 - Project title: Audit Opinion Prediction: A High-Dimensional Approach
- Eddie Walker publication: Johnson, R. & Walker II, E. G. (In Press).
 - Willingness to pay for recreational land use in Minnesota: International Journal of Food and Agricultural Economics
 - The International Journal of Food and Agricultural Economics (IJFAEC) is a quarterly, peer-reviewed, open access, scholarly journal which aims to publish empirical reports and theoretical reviews of research in the field of food and agricultural economics.



Math, Science and Technology Department

Update by Venugopal Mukku, Ph.D.

Associate Professor and Department Chair



What are our students doing?

Three of our students were accepted into professional schools:

- Brooke Van Overbeke, senior, exercise science and wellness, Apple Valley, Minn., was accepted into physical therapy school.
- Deaira Gresham, senior, health sciences, Maplewood, Minn., was accepted to the pharmacy program at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities.
- Marlee Steffes, senior, health sciences, Fertile, Minn., was accepted into the School of Optometry at Indiana University in Bloomington.

Exciting Program updates

We have completed the biology program review and are excited to be working on introducing three new emphases areas to the program. More information coming soon.



Agriculture and Natural Resources Department

Update by Kristina Walker, Ph.D.

Associate Professor

Department Chair



What are our students doing?

- The Agriculture and Natural Resources Rotary Student of the Month for September was Allison Bot, senior, animal science/pre-vet, Fargo, N.D., and Grace Guyette, senior, natural resources, Osakis, Minn., received the award in January.
- Students from the AGEC 3050 (Economics for Agribusiness Management) class participated in the AgCountry Financial Services virtual Marketing Day.

Program Updates: Upcoming Events

- 4-H Immersion Camp, June 21-24, 2021
- Region 5 Soils Judging Contest, September 2-October 1, 2021

Pictures speak more than words

The pictured banana tree has been on our campus since 1906 and the first class to eat bananas off the tree was in 1929. Fun fact, each time the tree produces fruit it dies and sends up a new tree from the roots!



Horticulture students Jacoby McConkey, senior, Sauk Rapids, Minn., and Sarah Richardt, junior, Crookston, Minn., go bananas for horticulture!



Golf and turf management student Trace Brayton, junior, Ogema, Wisc., is using a cup cutter at Minakwa Golf Course to collect plant/soil samples for use in a waterlogging study for the TURF 3075 Turf Stress Management course.



Neither rain nor COVID-19 prevented the annual digging of soil pits for the SOIL 1293 Soil Science Course. Adam Kiel, senior, horticulture, Thompson, N.D., Alyssa Kasprick, junior, agronomy, Thief River Falls, Minn., and Marina Wiley, senior, horticulture, International Falls, Minn., determine soil color, texture, and moisture content by soil horizons using soil samples taken from the soil pit.